SEPARATION
YET NO
Schiſme:
OR
NON-CONFORMISTS
NO
SCHISMATICKS:
BEING
A full and Sober VINDICATION
of the NON-CONFORMISTS, from the
Charge and Imputation of SCHISME.

IN
Anſwer to a Sermon lately Preached before the
Lord Mayor By *J. S.*

Iſaiah. 66. 5.

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word; your Brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my Names ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified, but he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.

London, Printed in the year, 1675.

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To the Reader.

Reader,

IF thou wouldſt have a reaſon of publiſhing theſe ſheets, the Author will tell thee, That it is now about four years ſince the People he pleads for (among whom he believes there are thouſands in the Land, that are Worſhippers of God in Spirit and Truth, according to the Goſpel) have through the good Providence of their great Shepherd the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and through the granted licenſe of an indulgent Prince, enjoyed a ſweet and bleſſed Calm. But obſerving lately the Clouds again to gather, and to have begun to diſcharge themſelves upon many of this People about *England*; and withal lately meeting with a Sermon, wherein this People are not ſparingly charged with Schiſm, and the penalties wherewith the laws threaten them, are pleaded for as very innocent harmleſs things, that Sober men (as he ſays) may be aſhamed to call perſecutions; I could not but thence conclude, that the Authors drift was to ſtir up and encourage the chief Magiſtrates of the City (for to them the Sermon was preached) to a rigorous Execution of thoſe gentle puniſhments, which are but ſuch little things as baniſhing, or impriſoning, or ſpoyling them of their Goods, and ſo undoing them and their Families, which are very trifles in his account. Now what can probably be the conſequents hereof (except the Magiſtrates as *David* prove wiſer than their Teachers) but that this people muſt needs be ſmitten, impoveriſhed, ſcattered, and as to their outward concernments ruined. But if this ſhall come to paſſe (and who knows what their God may permit for a time for their tryal?) what will they have left to ſupport and comfort them under ſuch preſſures, except the innocency of their Conſciences, and the Righteouſneſs of the cauſe for which they ſuffer. And this I ſay, whether their cauſe be good or bad, doth not as to the determination, depend upon the meer dictates of any

Mortals; and I am very verily perſwaded, it is not preſent ſdih be bad by all this Author hath ſaid, although he ha oved to cour and reaſoned againſt it, as if (in his conceit) he had ſpoke nothing but demonſtrations, which I ſhould now have immediately begun to reply to, but that I thought it moſt expedient, firſt to give the Reader a view of the caſe and cauſe of the Non-conformiſts, for which they are charged of Schiſm, and are thought to have deſerved all thoſe ſeverities which the law threatens.

The Non-Conformiſts caſe is this,

There are ſome hundreds of true Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, commiſſioned by him to Preach the Goſpel, and to adminiſter the Sacraments, (for ſo all true Miniſters are) thoſe according to their commiſſion do Preach, and there are many thouſands likewiſe of viſible profeſſors of Chriſtianity, do willingly hear and joyn with theſe Miniſters in the Worſhip of God, and in a participation of Sacraments as the Goſpel require s.

Theſe meet in diſtinct Congregations, ſeparate from the legally eſtabliſhed Congregations in the Land, with whom they Will not, becauſe they Cannot hold Communion.

Becauſe they thus ſeparate and refuſe Communion they are charged with Schiſme.

The reaſon why they thus ſeparate and refuſe Communion, is, becauſe they cannot have it with them; I ſay, they Cannot have it, becauſe they cannot or ought not to ſin; or to ſpeak modeſtly, becauſe they cannot do ſuch things which they extreamly ſuſpect to be ſinful, and if they do but ſtrongly ſuſpect them it is enough, for no man can be bound to act againſt a doubting Conſcience, and herein I have the ſuffrage of the Apoſtle, which every good Chriſtian ought much to preferre before any other who may preſume to Philoſophize to the contrary, who ſays, *Rom.* 14. he that doubteth is damned if he eat, becauſe he eateth not of Faith, for whatſoever is not of Faith is ſin.

If it be demanded, what thoſe things are which this people ſuſpect as ſinful. It may be anſwered, they are too well known, as that any among us ſhould ſtand in need of an information: but briefly, thoſe that are Miniſters, either they ſuſpect the ſinfulneſs of admitting a re-ordination, or of abjuring, or of aſſenting and conſenting to the uſe of all and every part of the Liturgy,

gy, and therein of every Ceremony. Now this I ſay, though the Friends of theſe impoſitions ſhall, with the higheſt confidence, affirm the lawfulneſs of them all, yea and endeavour with a thouſand arguments to prove them ſuch; yet if thoſe Miniſters herein concerned, upon a ſerious weighing of theſe arguments find them too light, and after much prayer to God for a reſolution, yet find themſelves to doubt, in this caſe they ought not, upon the Apoſtles rule now named, to yeild to any ſuch impoſitions againſt their doubting Conſciences.

If it be here replyed, why do they not then degrade themſelves, or quietly ſuffer themſelves to be degraded of their Miniſtry, and in the condition of private Chriſtians Communicate with this Church, for ſo they may do and free themſelves from theſe impoſitions?

It will be anſwered, that this is an impoſition they ſuſpect as ſinful as the reſt, for ſo long as they are perſwaded that their miſſion is originally from Chriſt, they cannot believe that it is either in their own Power, or in the Power of any other Inferiour to Chriſt, to give them a diſcharge from executing this their Office, except it be for Hereſie or obſtinate ſcandal againſt ſome known laws of Chriſt, and then indeed Chriſt hath left an order, not only for excluding them from their Office, but alſo from the Church, but neither of theſe latter are in the leaſt pretended, and therefore it is they cannot without ſuſpicion of ſin, either degrad themſelves, or quietly ſuffer themſelves to be degraded. And ſtill I adde, if any reaſons be urged for the lawfulneſs of this degradation, but ſuch that are ſhort of their conviction, ſo that ſtill they doubt, it will continue yet their duty to ſerve the Church as Miniſters, and not to liſt themſelves among private Chriſtians; as is adviſed.

If it be asked, but may not ſupream Magiſtrates (if they cannot diveſt Miniſters of their Office) may not they within their Dominion ſuſpend ſome of them from the exerciſe thereof, when they conceive it is for the Peace of the reſt?

It will be anſwered, that that Lord of Lords who giveth the Office and the Commiſſion, and hath by divers Providences deſigned the men thereto, hath certainly with the Office deſigned them to the exerciſe thereof, (for elſe verily the Office is in vain)

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and hath therein placed, not only the Office, but the exercise thereof above the restraint of any Powers whatever, that hold of and under him on Earth, so long as the exercise thereof continue to be regulated by the laws of Christ. But if any men on Earth shall appoint new Laws, different from those of Christs, and impose them on Ministers as conditions to be obeyed, without which they will restrain them the exercise of their Ministry, as being disturbers of the Peace; in such a case it is evident, that such Ministers may continue to Preach according to the Laws of Christ, but are restrained only by the Laws of men; whil'st then their Consciences lye under a superior obligation to Preach, than that by which they are restrained from Preaching, it is easie to conceive what they will or ought to do, *i. e.* whether they will or ought to Obey God or man.

If it be said, such Ministers are mistaken about the nature of such imposed Laws, as if they were different from, or contrary to the Laws of Christ, when they are no other but what Christ hath intrusted them with a Power of appointing, for the Peace of his Church.

It will be still answered, that this People are perswaded of the contrary; and that Christ hath not intrusted any men with such a Power, but do believe that they are things rather destructive of the true Peace of the Church. And this I say, whil'st they are so perswaded (though they should be mistaken) they ought not to go against their Consciences; for as the Apostle saith, he that doubteth and eateth is damned. So that from the whole it is evident, the reason why these Ministers cannot conform and why they yet continue to Preach, is, because they cannot do the one, nor forbear the other without sin; which is a just ground of their separation, and of persevering in the exercise of their Ministry, and therefore separation in this case (as to them) is no Schism. Some will be ready to say, but what is all this to the common People? they are Schismaticks without doubt; for they have no such impositions upon them.

It may be answered, that if the Ministers now named are yet true ministers of Jesus Christ, and that the exercise of their ministry hath not been according to any Law of Christ restrained, it will follow, it can be no sin in the Disciples of Christ to own them whom their Lord owneth; or to hear them whom their Lord

Lord hath commiſſioned to that end, and by no Law of his are reſtrained from acting according to that Commiſſion.

Again, in as much as Chriſt is ſuppoſed to continue his Commiſſion to theſe miniſters to Preach, it neceſſarily follows, that Chriſt hath a People to whom he ſends them: for it's abſurd to conceive, that Chriſt ſhould ſend his miniſters to preach to no body; if then they may preach, it cannot be unlawful for the people to hear them, no nor to partake of any ordinance from them, which as miniſters they may adminiſter.

Yet again, multitudes of the people did own them as Chriſts miniſters, and did joyn with them in all Ordinances, as ſuch, and this for ſeveral years together, and certainly during thoſe times they could not be eſteemed Schiſmaticks, for ſo doing, ſince there were no other miniſters ordinarily to be found. If then they were no Schiſmaticks, howcome they to be ſo ſince? if it be ſaid the Law of the Land makes them ſuch: it may be anſwered, that ſince Schiſme (of which we ſpeak) is a ſin peculiar and proper to a Church, it is a wonder how a Law of a Land, that is perfectly extraneous to a Church, can make that at one time a Schiſme, which at another time cannot be ſaid to be ſuch. Nor do I think, that thoſe that now think themſelves the Church, and that all that ſeparate from them are Schiſmaticks, in caſe they had a Law of the Land to eſtabliſh Presbytery, or Independency, or Anabaptiſtry, would conceive of themſelves as Schiſmaticks if they continued in that way they are in, and refuſed to hold Communion with that the Law eſtabliſhed: and in Truth I cannot poſſibly conceive how that may be ſaid juſtly to day, that it is no Schiſme, and yet to morrow it may be juſtly called ſo, meerly becauſe of an intervening humane Law.

Laſtly, as for the people, it may be further anſwered, that though they be not under the ſame impoſitions as their miniſters are, yet they are not altogether free from impoſitions which they extreamly ſuſpect as ſinful: as that they cannot enjoy Baptiſm for their Children without the Croſſe; nor receive the Lords Supper without kneeling; to name no more. If you ſay theſe are not ſinful; it is anſwered, ſuppoſe they be not, yet in caſe they ſuſpect them vehemently as ſuch, and all your arguments cannot reſolve their doubts, it is evident they would go againſt, and wound their Conſciences, in caſe they ſhould ſubmit to the one, or the other.

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If therefore these people shall, for these reasons, joyn with those ministers in all Ordinances, I see no ground to charge this people with Schisme, no more than their ministers.

Thus having, with as much brevity as I could, stated the case and cause of this people, we shall now come to take an account of Mr. *J. S.* his Sermon before the Mayor, which contains an impeachment of Schism, and a pretended proof thereof against this people. They are now upon their tryal, and say, not guilty, and offer themselvs to be tryed by the Laws of Jesus Christ, which are the only Laws of his Church.

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The Sermon of Mr. *J. S.* Examined.

THE deſign of that Sermon, one would be apt to think, was to promote Peace among the Proteſtant profeſſors in *England*; whoſe differences are Univerſally acknowledged, to be about matters of no fundamental concernment, as to the Doctrine of Chriſtianity. His text, *Rom.* 14. 19. was well ſuited to that purpoſe, *Let us follow after the things which make for Peace.* And doubtleſſe if he had proſecuted this his deſign, by the ſame means and methods as the Apoſtle there doth, *viz.* not ſo much by ſetting himſelf to reſolve their controverſies, or to determine which ſide held the trueſt opinion; as to ſilence their diſputes, and to allay their bitterneſſes to each other, by ſhewing that they had nothing to do to judge or cenſure their brethren, becauſe they were Gods Servants, and to him only they ſtood or fell: and rather for Peace ſake, to forbear doing that which they might lawfully do, than by any undue uſe of their liberty to caſt a ſtumbling block before the weak uninſtructed diſſenters: This he confeſſeth *pag.* 1. 2. was the way the Apoſtle took, and certainly if he had followed ſo great an example, he had (like a man of Wiſdom as well as of Peace) proſecuted an excellent end by moſt excellent means: but inſtead thereof he takes a quite contrary method, for inſtead of perſwading Chriſtians to lay aſide their Controverſies, he himſelf raiſeth them; inſtead of diſſwading them from cenſuring their brethren, as being to ſtand or fall to a higher Maſter, he cenſureth them as guilty of Schiſm; obſtinately maintained *pag.* 7. And inſtead of perſwading them to forbear doing thoſe things (which ſome think) they may lawfully do, (as the making uſe of preſcribed Prayers and Ceremonies) leaſt a ſtumbling block ſhould be caſt before their weak brethren, he falls pag. 5. into Encomiums of the excellency of the preſent Church Government, the eaſineſs of the Terms of Communion, the Lawfulneſs of the uſe of the publick Service, and Antiqui-

ty of the Ceremonies, and then doth conclude that Sober men ſhould be aſhamed to call the penalties which the Laws inflict on thoſe that ſeparate from the Church in theſe things, Perſecutions. The plain *Engliſh* of all this is, that the great Apoſtle and this Perſon are of two minds concerning theſe things which make for Peace, the Apoſtle is for not judging the Lords Servants, and he is for judging them: The Apoſtle is ſtill for holding Communion, notwithſtanding thoſe differences remain, but he is for forcing them to ſay and do as the Church doth, or elſe for puniſhing them with fines, impriſonments as the Laws require. But certainly, as he herein leaves the Apoſtle, ſo the Apoſtle leaves him, and in this deſerted Condition as we find him I hope it will be no preſumption to call his reaſonings about this matter to an account.

The ſtrength of what he hath ſaid to juſtifie his charge of Schiſme againſt this people he hath compriſed in five Propoſitions, which we ſhall examine in order.

His firſt Propoſition begins pag. 10. which is this.

That every Chriſtian upon the very account of being ſo, is a member of the Church of Chriſt, and is bound to joyn in external Communion with it where it can be had.

I anſwer, this Propoſition is very obſcurely laid down, nor is it releived by any light afforded in the after explication: and certainly if it be to be underſtood according to the proper meaning of the words and phraſes therein contained, (as it ought to be;) I ſhall not ſcruple to call the Truth thereof into Queſtion, For.

Firſt, If we conſider *a Chriſtian upon the very account of his being ſo*, which is the Subject of the Propoſition; who can think but thereby as you phraſe it, you intend to affirm nothing of him as ſuch, but what doth neceſſarily and eſſentially belong to him, without which he could be no Chriſtian, and conſequently if he be a Chriſtian he muſt neceſſarily be a Member of Chriſts Church, in the ſence of [Church] in the Propoſition which is ſuch as therewith an external Communion may be held.

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If this be your meaning, as I ſuppoſe it is, becauſe in your explication of this Propoſition you ſeem to hold, that Chriſt *died primarily for his Church, and but in a ſecondary ſence for individual Believers*, ſo that it ſeems to follow, that none can be true Chriſtians or in a ſalvable ſtate, but as they are conſidered incorporated into, and ſo made one of this Church, ſo that Church-Member-ſhip is eſſential to them. If this I ſay be your meaning, then give me leave to take the boldneſs to deny the Propoſition, for I cannot underſtand that a Chriſtian as ſuch, includes any eſſential relation to a Church in your ſence.

That I may clear up this matter a little, give me leave to tell you that this term Chriſtian may fall under divers conſiderations, as firſt, by a Chriſtian we may underſtand a man whoſe Nature is changed by the Preaching of the Goſpel, ſo as thereby he is of an ignorant Infidel and wicked man, made an intelligent Believer, and a good man; certainly in this ſence it is eaſie to underſtand a Chriſtian without any ſuch correlate as a Church, ſo that in this ſence a Chriſtian as ſuch, is no more related to a Church, than a man conſidered as a man, ſpeaks any Relation to a Kingdom or Common-wealth: and therefore your Propoſition in this ſcence cannot be true.

But becauſe this change of Nature, can't be wrought in any man but by the Power of God co-working with the Goſpel: and ſince this exertion of Power is called Regeneration, upon this account a Chriſtian is to be conſidered as a relative *viz.* as a Son of God, the correlate is God his Father, and the Foundation of this Relation is Regeneration. But here a Chriſtian is not conſidered as any ways related to a Church, but only as related to God, and who is not able to underſtand a Chriſtian as well as *Adam* to be a Son of God without any Relation to any Society of men whatever.

But ſince it is certain that God hath exerted this Regenerating Power to more than one, and that he hath many Sons and Daughters, hence it is that every Son of God ſtands in an other Relation, and that is to all the reſt that are in the ſame manner born of God, which in conjunction make up Gods family or Church.

But then I ſay, that the Church here is to be taken for the inviſible Church, for the Father or Head of this Family is the inviſi-

ble God, and the Children are Members who considered as to their Regeneration, that is the Foundation of the Relation are also invisible; and therefore neither in this sence can the Proposition be true, for every Christian upon the account of his internal Membership is not therefore a Member of a visible Church, for there may be 7000 such invisible Members in *Israel*, when there was no appearance of a visible Church as to them, where any external Communion was held; and yet this is that the Proposition drives at, that every Christian as such, is a Member of such a Church with which external Communion may be held, which is in this sence apparently false.

Yet again all these internal Members of God's Family, may be considered as outwardly professing their Faith and associateing together as they can, for the Worship of God: among whom creep in many Hypocrites, by professing the same Faith and joyning in the same Worship with them, which together make up the Catholick Visible Church, in this sence I grant that every professing Christian may be reckoned as a Member of the Catholick visible Church.

But yet I deny, that this relation is essential and necessary to him, upon the very account of his being a Christian; for he might be a Believer and a Son of God, and internally related to all invisible Members without this Catholick visible Membership, nor doth he indeed deny it, for in case (says he) that no such visible Church can be found, or in case they be scattered by extream Persecution, or in case of an unjust excommunication, Christians may be Christians without being Members of Christs visible Church, which indeed are concessions that overturn the Truth of his Proposition; for if a man may be a Christian without being a Member of Christs visible Church, then it can not be true that every Christian upon the very account of his being so, is a Member of such a Church: for if it be true that *Peter* may be a man without being incorporated into any civil Society, then it must be false to say, that *Peter* upon the very account of his being a man must be a member of such a Society.

But let us now come to examine the other part of the Proposition, and his sence of it; which is what may be there meant by the Church of Christ, of which he saith, every Christian upon

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the very account of his being ſo, is a member; and that he is bound to joyn with it in external Communion. By Church (as may be gathered out of his explication of this Propoſition) he underſtands *a Society of particular Perſons, gathered out of mankind and formed into a Body Politick of which Chriſt is the Head.* This I confeſſe is ſomewhat, but not ſufficient to give us his determinate ſence thereof, for as he hath here deſcribed it, for ought we know, he may mean only an internal inviſible Church, which is an internal inviſible body Politick, of which the inviſible Chriſt is Head, and thoſe that are internally united to him by a true and living Faith, are inviſible Members. This certainly is an inviſible Church, for not only the Head is inviſible as to us, but ſo likewiſe are the Members conſidered as true Believers, for no man can ſee the Truth of anothers Faith clearly and certainly.

But methinks he ſhould not take [Church] in this ſence, becauſe firſt, he ſpeaks of a Church wherewith every Chriſtian is bound to ſeek external Communion, but no external Communion can be had with a Church conſidered as inviſible. And ſecondly, becauſe he ſpeaks of Communion with ſuch a Church where Communion is hazardous, as is implyed by his ſuppoſition (*if it can be had,*) now certainly there is no hazard in obtaining an internal Communion with Chriſt the Head and all true Believers, for that may always be had when an external Communion cannot.

But if he by Church means the Catholick viſible Church conſiſting of all individual profeſſors of the Chriſtian Doctrine thoroughout the world, united to Chriſt their Head, which is moſt likely to be his meaning, then the ſence of the Propoſition is this,

3. That Chriſt the inviſible Head in Heaven, being joyned to his inviſible Profeſſors on Earth make up a Body Politick (whether he will call this Body Politick viſible or inviſible I know not, but ſure I am, the Head thereof which is the more principal part is inviſible.) But this he ſaith, that it is the Duty of every particular Chriſtian to joyn with this Church in external Communion if it may be had.

To this I ſay, it is well he puts in (if it may be had) for ano-

ther reaſon beſides what he imagined when he inſerted that clauſe, and that is, becauſe no ſuch Communion external can be had with ſuch a body Politick as he calls it.

Firſt, Becauſe it is very improper to ſay that any one is obliged to hold an external Communion with a Politick body, where no Head is owned but what is inviſible; for ſince the principal and eſſential Member of a body Politick is the Head, and that no external Communion can be had therewith as inviſible, it cannot be truely ſaid that we may have, or are bound to ſeek ſuch an Eternal Communion therewith as a body politick. I wonder who ever talkt at that rate, as to ſay every man as a Creature was bound to ſeek an external Communion with mankind, as making up a body Politick under the inviſible God the Creator and ſupream Governour.

Secondly, I ſay no ſuch external Communion can be had, becauſe of the vaſt numbers of profeſſing Chriſtians ſcattered at ſuch great diſtances upon the face of the Earth, that no ſuch Communion can poſſibly be obtained, ſo that it is as poſſible to conceive how an external Communion may be had by every individual man with all mankind, as how it may be had by every Chriſtian with the whole body of Chriſtians throughout the World:

This is ſo evident that he cannot but confeſs ſo much pag. 14. we cannot (ſaith he) Communicate with the Catholick Church, but by Communicating with ſome part of it.

But I ſay, by Communicating with ſome part of it, we do not therefore Communicate externally with the whole, for who ever ſaid that a man by holding a Communion with one City or Corporation that thereby he held an external Politick Communion with all mankind, and what is it that you can ſay for the one, but I can ſay much alike for the other.

Do you ſay, but all Chriſtians are united under one Head the Lord Chriſt, ſo (ſay I) are all mankind united under one God who is their Head and Governour.

Do (you ſay) all Chriſtians Communicate in ſome external priviledges, ſo (ſay I) do all mankind, they are enlightned by the ſame Sun, breath in the ſame air, feed on the Fruits of the ſame Earth.

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Do you ſay, but they have not the ſame Laws as Chriſtians have, which are neceſſary to unite them in one body Politick. I anſwer, but if all mankind had the very ſame Laws, yet if the publication and execution of thoſe Laws were in different Kings hands that had juriſdiction over each other, this were not enough to ſpeak them all of one external Politick Communion; no more do the ſame Laws amongſt Chriſtians (ſince the publication and execution thereof, is in the hands of different viſible Church Governours, that have no juriſdiction over each other) ſpeak any external Politick Communion among all Chriſtians.

Thus have I ſhewn, of what words and phraſes, of an uncertain and undetermin'd ſence, the parts of the Propoſition conſiſt, and how hard it is, to give any tollerable ſound ſenee of the whole; we ſhall now further enquire of the interpretation given, whether it can afford any further light to underſtand it better.

For the clearing of this (he ſaith) *you may be pleaſed to conſider that the primary deſign and intention of our Saviour in his undertaking for us, was, not to ſave particular Perſons without reſpect to a Society, but to gather to himſelf a Church in the form of a Body Politick, of which himſelf is the Head, and particular Chriſtians the Members, and in this method through obedience to his Laws and Government to bring men to Salvation.*

If I underſtand the force of theſe words with reſpect to the Propoſition, it is this that you would prove; that every Chriſtian upon the very account of his being ſo, muſt needs be a Member of the Church, becauſe Chriſt intended not to ſave particular Chriſtians but under the conſideration of being Members of the Church.

I confeſs if this was as true as I ſuſpect it to be falſe, there would be weight in what is ſaid: But let it be tryed.

You ſay that Chriſt primarily deſigned to ſave his Church, and but ſecondarily individual Chriſtians, as incorporated in this Church.

I pray tell me, do you take Church here, as you do in the Propoſition? certainly you ought ſo to do; why elſe do you call this a clearing of that? now it is evident you take Church in

in the Propoſition, for the Catholick viſible Church exiſting in the World, with whom you ſay an external Communion is to be ſought, as hath been before ſhew'd. But how abſurd is what you ſay if you take Church in this ſence! For,

Firſt, you hereby ſay that Chriſt did primarily deſign to ſave this preſent exiſting Catholick Church; what can be more abſurd? did not Chriſt, think you, as primarily deſign all thoſe parts of his Church that in their paſt Generations did once exiſt here on Earth, and doth not he alike deſign to ſave that part that is yet to be born? Again, you herein ſay, that Chriſt primarily deſigned to ſave the Catholick viſible Church, which is evidently falſe; for Chriſt never deſigned to ſave his viſible Catholick Church, much leſſe conſidered as viſible, and therefore cannot be ſaid Primarily to deſign Their Salvation: for Chriſts deſign was to ſave only a part of his viſible Church, and that part not conſidered as viſible, but as inviſibly united to himſelf by a living Faith.

Yet again if the quite contrary be true, *viz.* That Chriſt firſt deſigned the Salvation of particular Chriſtians and but in a ſecondary ſence the Church that is made up of them, then what you ſay muſt needs be falſe, *viz.* that Chriſt deſigned Salvation to the Church primarily, and to particular Members ſecondarily, as in Union with the Church. The former of which I affect for theſe reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe all individual ſincere Chriſtians have all qualifications that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, antecedently to a viſible Church ſtate, as actual Faith and Repentance if they be adult; or the promiſe of the Covenant upon their Parents Faith if they be Infants, which are Foundations of, and give Title to a viſible Church State. Therefore our Saviour primarily deſigned to ſave them as ſuch, and as for his deſigning ſuch to be admitted into a viſible Church State by Baptiſm, it was but to Seal that Salvation to them, and to promote and carry on that Salvation that was antecedently ſecured to them by the Covenant, upon their Repentance and Faith in the Lord Jeſus: the very Truth is, Chriſt did not intend at all to ſave men as viſible Church Members, but only as true Believers, for the fundamental ſaving Doctrine of the Goſpel doth not run thus, he that

that is a Member of the viſible Church ſhall be ſaved, *but he that Believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that Believeth not ſhall be damned.*

If it be objected, But doth not the Apoſtle *Peter*, Preach not only Repentance, but likewiſe Baptiſm as neceſſary to Remiſſion of ſins; and conſequently to Salvation: when he ſays Repent and be Baptized every one of you, for the Remiſſion of ſins? And is not Baptiſme an Ordinance of admiſſion into a viſible Church State? Acts 2. 30.

I anſw. they are both indeed commanded, but not as equally neceſſary, for Repentance gives the fundamental title to remiſſion, Baptiſme doth only give the Seal; the former is ſo neceſſary that without it no remiſſion can be obtained: the other is but for the more comfortable aſſurance of that priviledge to the penitent; but not abſolutely neceſſary as the other: and this our Saviour moſt clearly intimates when he ſaith, *Mark.* 16. 16. *He that Believeth and is Baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that Believeth not ſhall be damned.* Men ſhall be damned meerly upon the account of their unbelief, and not meerly for want of Baptiſm, provided they have Faith. And yet Baptiſm hath its great uſe, as I have acknowledged, but as I ſaid not abſolutely neceſſary, for if men only Believe and never have an opportunity of being Baptized, and ſo of being admitted into a viſible Church ſtate thereby, then Salvation is not at all hazarded.

My next reaſon is this, It cannot be true that Chriſt only deſigned to ſave particular Chriſtians as Members of the viſible Church: becauſe it were impoſſible then that any Chriſtians that were not viſible Church Members ſhould be ſaved, for if it muſt fare with particular Chriſtians, with reſpect to this body Politick (as he is pleaſed to call it) the Church, as it doth with the Members of the natural Body, where it is confeſt that God by his Providence only intends to give life to each Member, and likewiſe the continuance of Life as united together in one body, it will certainly follow that if any Member of the Church be ſeparated from the Church it muſt neceſſarily periſh, as if a hand or a foot were ſeparated from the natural body it doth certainly periſh. But by his leave this is very falſe, as to particular Chriſtians with reſpect to the Church: for, firſt all Chriſtians

do not ſpring out of the Church as the Members of the natural body do out of that body, for when Infidels believe, they ſpring out of the World or Maſſe of mankind, and not out of the Church; and by believing are firſt united to Chriſt, and then as *Saul* converted, they eſſay to joyn themſelves to the Church, ſo that firſt they are internal members of a Church, or are fit matter to be made members of, and afterwards making a profeſſion of Faith, are made formal Members of a viſible Church, which is ſolemnized by Baptiſme. Secondly, and if it ſo happen that by unjuſt excommunication any true Chriſtian be cut off from the viſible Church, yet it keeps its Life, as no Member in a natural body can do. The concluſion is this, that if Chriſtians are in a ſalvable ſtate before Union to a viſible Church, and if they may be in a ſalvable ſtate, when wrongfully cut off by Excommunication; then it cannot be true, that Chriſt did but in a ſecondary way intend the Salvation of particular Chriſtians *viz.* as united to a Church.

My third and laſt reaſon is this, I ſay Chriſt did not primarily deſign to ſave his Church, and but ſecondarily particular Members as he aſſerts: which I thus prove. That reſpect which individual men have to civil Society, as Kingdomes or Republicks; that reſpect have particular Chriſtians to the viſible Church of Chriſt, according to his own notion of a Church which he conſiders as a body Politick. Now I ſay, God in making the World, did not primarily deſign Kingdomes and Commonwealths, but he primarily deſigned the giving of particular men their exiſtences: and ſecondarily, Kingdoms and Republicks for their better accommodation; Men were not made for Kingdoms, but Kingdoms for Men. Therefore ſo did Chriſt, he firſt deſigned the putting of particular men into a State of Salvation by giving to them Faith and Repentance and Remiſſion of ſins, and then deſigned, as a conſequent thereof, to collect them into a Society or Societies, under Governours of his appointment, to be ruled by Laws of his own Ordination, for the building them up in their Faith and comforts to his Glory: ſo that this Society or Societies, of Church or Churches, with the Laws and Ordinances thereto belonging, are but for the ſakes and ſubordinated to the welfare of particular Chriſtians, and therefore

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it is neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould firſt intend the welfare or Salvation of particulars, before the meer aſſociating them into Church or Churches under Government, which is but a means to that great end of ſaving particulars. For certainly, that which is more excellent in the Nature of things, is primarily deſigned by every rational Agent, before that which is leſſe excellent: ſo certainly is the reſtauration of particular Perſons, in giving them renewed Natures, Remiſſion of ſins, and a Title to Salvation, before that meer order that ought to be amongſt them for their ſecurity and comfort, which is acquired by aſſociatio ns or Church Government.

If it yet be not clear, give me leave to illuſtrate this matter yet further by this ſimilitude: Let us conſider Chriſt as the general of an Army, who is by the Apoſtle called the Captain of our Salvation, and the Church under him as an Army under ſeveral Officers, for their better Order and Government; and all particular Chriſtians as ſo many particular Souldiers. Now let us conſider the ſeveral ends which a general hath in gathering his Souldiers into an Army, and which end is more principally intended, and which end leſſe principally or ſubordinately intended. His firſt end is to ſubdue his Enemies, to the Praiſe of his Juſtice and Valour: the next end intended is the preſervation of his Souldiers, without which the more principal end cannot be obtained; and that which is an end ſubordinate to both theſe, is the keeping his Souldiers in Union and Order under their ſeveral Officers, for without this Union and Order, the particular Souldiers cannot ſo well be preſerved: ſo that here it is evident that the uniting of his Men and keeping them under Diſcipline, is ſubordinately intended for the preſervation of particulars. In like manner God in Chriſt deſigning to ſave ſinners, Firſt, he intends the Praiſe of his Glorious Grace; Secondly, he intends the Salvation of particular ſinners, by Regenerating and pardoning of them: And laſtly, he intends the Collection of them into a body or bodies under Diſcipline, for their better ſafety and ſecurity; this laſt is not principally or leſſe principally, but that which is ſubordinately intended to both the other. The concluſion that ariſeth hence is this, that this Author is much miſtaken when he ſaith, that Chriſt did pri-

marily intend the Salvation of his Church, and ſecondarily the Salvation of particular Chriſtians; *cujus contrarium verum eſt*; as I have ſhewed.

We ſhall now further conſider what he hath ſaid for the confirmation of this his notion, concerning Chriſts primary intention to ſave his Church, *&c.*

This (ſaith he) *is no more than what is the ſence and Language of the Holy Scriptures, wherein, whatever Chriſt is ſaid to have done and ſuffered for mankind, he is ſaid to have done for them, not as ſcattered individuals, but as incorporated into a Church.* Eph. 5. 25. *Thus Chriſt lov'd the Church, and gave himſelf for it.* Act. 20. 28. *Chriſt Redeemed the Church with his own precious Blood.* Eph. 5. 23. *Chriſt is the Saviour of his Body.*

The plain conſequence *from hence* is (ſaith he) that every *perſon* ſo far *as he is* a Chriſtian, ſo far he is a Member of the *Church*; and by virtue of that Relation to the Church it is, that he hath any Relation to Chriſt, or any Title to the Priviledges of the Goſpel.

I anſwer it is a wonder to me, to ſee the Authour, otherwiſe a Perſon of good abilities, ſo ſtrangely miſled into the confidence of a concluſion that is raiſed upon ſuch palpable miſtaken principals.

He ſays that what ever Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for mankind, he hath done it for them; not as ſcattered individuals, but as incorporated into a Church.

I perceive by this that the Authour is not for Univerſal Redemption, as ſome of his brethren are; for I cannot ſee how Chriſt dying for all, is conſiſtent with Chriſt's dying for men, conſidered as incorporated into his Church, for it is certain, that the greateſt number of individuals that hath been, or are in the World, were, or are not like to be ſo incorporated. Yet further, certainly the Author doth run himſelf and his Reader into much confuſion for want of a Regular ſtating of the ſeveral Aſpects, which Chriſts ſufferings have to mankind, as they fall under divers conſiderations. As firſt, if mankind be conſidered as lapſed into a ſtate of ſin and death: ſo they are ſaid to be Enemies to God and Righteouſneſs, Dead in Treſpaſſes and ſins, without God, without hope. I hope the Author doth not take

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men ſo conſidered as in any Church ſtate, and yet it is certain that according to Scriptures, Chriſts ſuffering was with Relation to men as ſuch, *Rom.* 5. 8. *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us.* So *Col.* 1. 21. *And you that were ſometime alienated and Enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the Body of his Fleſh through Death.* In theſe Texts it's evident that Chriſt's death, reſpected men as incoporated in the corrupt Maſſe of mankind; and not as incorporated into a Church.

Secondly, Chriſts ſufferings reſpects men, conſidered as ſuch, that *de futuro*, were to partake of the benefits of Chriſt's Death: which benefits, are either of an abſolute, or of a Relative and Politick Conſideration.

Thoſe that are abſolute, are ſuch as the changing of mens Natures, Remiſſion of Sins, Faith in Chriſt, Repentance from dead Work; theſe are all given and beſtowed on men with reſpect to what Chriſt did and ſuffered for them. Here men are to be conſidered abſolutely as individual Chriſtians, and not as any Members of a Society or a Church, for I can, as any man elſe may eaſily, conſider a man as a Believer, as a Penitent, as in favour with God, without conſidering him under any Politick Relations: as we may conceive of men as wiſe, juſt and innocent, without conceiving them as Citizens or Subjects. There are other benefits that are likewiſe the purchaſe of Chriſts death, and they are of a relative and Politick conſideration; and here it is that the Communion of the Saints, or Church Fellow-ſhip hath its place, which Communion is either internal, and this is a priviledge peculiar only to that Church of Chriſt, which every Member is conſidered as really and ſincerely united to Chriſt; by a true Faith: and to each other in a love unfeigned, or external; which properly belongs to Chriſtians co-united together in an external profeſſion of Faith, in aſſociating for publick worſhip and ſubmitting to Chriſts Diſcipline.

Now of all theſe benefits, ſome are more principall, ſome leſs, ſome are of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation; others not.

Thoſe that are of a more principal conſideration, and of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation; are ſuch that belong to Chriſtians as individuals, ſuch as Faith and Repentance, Remiſſion of ſins,

and ſuch like, which they have by virtue of Union with Chriſt, without any reſpect to any Politick Union with one another: as for thoſe benefits which are of a Politick or relative conſideration, they are leſſe principal and not of that neceſſity to Salvation, ſuch are the Love of all Saints and their mutual Prayers for each other. Such are worſhiping together, and the benefits of Chriſts Diſcipline, now though theſe are excellent in their kinds, yet much inferiour to thoſe of Faith and Repentance and Remiſſion of ſins, as being not ſo abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, as theſe are.

Now I would fain know of the Author, whether it be more true to ſay, that Chriſt by his death did primarily intend to ſave men as Believers, as Penitent, as Renewed and pardoned, which belongs to Chriſtians conſidered as individuals, which is what I affirm: or to ſay he primarily intended to ſave men as hearing, praying, praiſing and receiving the Lords Supper together, and likewiſe by being under Diſcipline; which are the priviledges that belong to Chriſtians as falling under a Politick conſideration: which is what he ſeems to affirm. If the former be true, then the latter which he hath aſſerted is falſe; for both of them cannot be primarily intended. Now I conceive the former true, becauſe it is every where affirmed in Scripture, that he that believes, he that repents, he that is regenerate, he that is pardoned, ſhall be ſaved.

But it is no where promiſed, that thoſe that pray and praiſe, *&c.* with the Church, that they ſhall be ſaved, except it be with reſpect unto Faith and Repentance, which as I have ſaid, belong to Chriſtians as individuals, and not as Members of a Church.

But he ſaith, *that herein he ſpeaks but the ſence and Language of the Holy Scriptures*: and here he quoteth three texts, as *Eph.* 5. 25. *Acts* 20. 28. *Eph.* 5. 23. well! what doth he gather thence? *Hence* (ſaith he) *it is plain, that Chriſt died primarily for his Church, and for individuals not as ſcattered but as incorporated into his Church.*

But by your favour here is more in your concluſion, than is in thoſe premiſed Texts: indeed I read there, that Chriſt gave himſelf for his Church, and that he redeemed his Church with his blood, and that he is the Saviour of his body which is his Church.

Church. But I find not a word there, of dying primarily for his Church, and but ſecondarily for individuals as incorporated into his Church.

If any ſhall ſay, all this is implyed if not expreſt. I ſay, who ever ſo thinks is obliged to ſhew how, and which way it comes to be implied, but to ſave them the Labour, I am bold to affirm the contrary, that there is no ſuch thing implyed; my reaſon is this, becauſe Church in each of thoſe places is taken for a collection of particular Chriſtians, conſidered primarily as true believers, as true penitents, and but ſecondarily as in Union one with another, and as in Fellowſhip in Church Ordinances.

My reaſons are, firſt becauſe there is nothing in the words or context that can force a contrary interpretation. Secondly, becauſe the nature of the thing ſpoken of in theſe verſes will bear no interpretation, but ſuch as I give. Becauſe the intents of Chriſts dying muſt be meaſured according to the Nature of things, ſo that what is more excellent muſt be intended before that which is leſſe excellent, now mens being particularly united to Chriſt by Faith, their having their Natures changed, and their ſins pardoned, are more excellent than their Union and Communion with each other in external Ordinances, that are but inferior Miniſteries ſubſervient to their Faith, and their renewed Natures, and the edification of them therein; therefore Chriſt muſt intend his death primarily for his Church as Believers: now as I have formerly ſaid, Believers, as ſuch, are not Members of a Church, for Faith ſpeaks a relation to Chriſt, but no relation immediately to any other Chriſtian or Chriſtians whatever.

Again under what qualification, and for what reaſon Chriſt is ſaid primarily to be Saviour of the Church, his body; under that qualification, and for that reaſon, Chriſt is ſaid primarily to dye and ſhed his blood for his Body. But Chriſt doth not ſave his Church under the qualification, or for that reaſon primarily, becauſe they are united in external Acts of Worſhip and Diſcipline, and upon that account it is they are of your viſible Politick body or Church, but becauſe its particular Members are Believers and penitent, but Chriſtians *quatenus* Believers or peni-

penitent are not consider as Members of a Church, for indeed Faith and Repentance speak no relation immediately to any but God and Christ, that of Church Membership comes in as a consequent thereof, to which priviledge Faith gives the Title. Therefore Christ did not dye to save his Church *quatenus* a Society, united for worship, *&c.* but *quatenus* its Members are true Believers and no further, and for this cause I assert, that the primary end of Christs death was to save individual Believers and but secondarily to save his Church, so far as it consisted of such and no further.

Yet again if Christ intended primarily to save men because they were Members of a Church: Then certainly, the first thing that the Gospel should presse upon sinners is, that they should first unite themselves to the Church, which to say it doth is both false and absurd: its false, for the first cry of the Gospel is to men considered in a state of sin and Death, and it is that they would repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus, upon the doing of which it promiseth remission and a Title to Salvation, and till this be done there is no mention of any command obliging them to become a Member of a Church: and besides it is absurd, for before Faith and Repentance, either in reality or profession, men are no more capable of being Members of a Church, than a Hog or Horse are capable of being Citizens of *London*. He that considers what hath been said, may soon see what little help those Scriptures he mentions afford his notion, and upon what slender grounds he builds that confident conclusion of his, *viz. That by virtue of that relation to the Church it is that a Christian hath any relation to Christ.*

He addes, *Agreeable to this notion, it is* (saith he) *very plain, that Baptism which is by all acknowledged to be the Ceremony of initiating us into Christianity, is in Scripture declared to be the Rite, whereby we are entred and admitted into the Church*, this St. *Paul* expresly tells us, *That we are all Baptized into one Body*, again *that Christ hath sanctified*, i. e. hath *separated his Church by the washing of Water, and the Word.*

I wonder that the Author should say that these Scriptures are agreeable to his notion, that Christ intends the Salvation of no particular Christians but considered as members of a Church.

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I anſwer, they are even juſt ſo much agreeable to his notion as the texts before-named.

He ſays all acknowledge, that *Baptiſme is a ceremony initiating us into chriſtianity.*

I wonder who acknowledges ſo in your ſence? I am ſure not all or but very few: for Chriſtianity objectively is the doctrine of Chriſt ſubjectively the ſame Doctrine as believed by us with a reſolution to obey it, but aſſuredly the Doctrine of Chriſt is firſt preached and heard and believed, and a reſolution taken up to obey it, and all this is antecedent in the adult to baptiſme, or ought to be ſo. As for Baptiſme, it is but a profeſſing ſign of my being a Chriſtian, or a ſeal of the promiſes that God hath made to me, as ſuch, and is not a Ceremony that makes me a Chriſtian, or gives me my Chriſtianity. *Abraham* was a Believer, and a Friend of God, and juſtified by his faith antecedent to circumciſion, and ſo are the ſeed of *Abraham*, they are believers, friends of God, juſtified by their Faith in Chriſt, antecedent to Baptiſme.

But it is added, *doth not* Paul *ſay we are all by one Spirit baptized into one body*?

True, he doth ſo; But I deny your conſequence thence deduced, that therefore Chriſt died primarily for his Church, and but ſecondarily for the individual members thereof, or that we have primarily a relation to the Church and but ſecondarily to Chriſt, *i.e.* by virtue of the former relation. There is not one word or ſyllable in the text tending that way. For Firſt, what is there in theſe words, *we are baptized into one body*, to ſignifie a priority of our relation to the Church, any more than in thoſe *Rom.* 6. 3. where it is ſaid *we are baptized into Chriſt*, to ſignifie a priority of our relation to Chriſt, and by him to his Church? reconcile theſe if you can to the ſence of your conſequence, and give us ſome evident reaſon why we muſt needs underſtand, that thereby is meant we are baptized into the Church primarily, and into Chriſt ſecondarily: But I ſhall be bold to tell you ſuch an interpretation is evidently abſurd, as is manifeſt in ſeveral inſtances in other kind of relations. Whoever ſaid that King *Charles* the 2d was only related to *Charles* the Firſt, as he is related to his brother *James* Duke of *York* and the reſt of the Royal Family? certainly as he is the Elder Brother his relation to his Father was

firſt both in nature and time to any relation he ſtood in to his younger brethren. Or whoever ſaid that the individuals of a Kingdome cannot be conſidered in relation to their King and Soveraign antecedently to their being conſidered as fellow ſubjects? when certainly the relation of fellow ſubjects doth ariſe upon the ſuppoſed relation of thoſe individuall ſubjects to their ſoveraign; for the formal reaſon why you and I are fellow ſubjects is, becauſe we are individually related to the ſame King, and therefore relation to him is antecedent to our relation to one another as ſubjects.

The ſence of this text now urged, ſo far as I underſtand is only this, that all that are baptized upon a juſt title are ſuppoſed to partake of the ſanctifying operation of the Spirit, of which the waſhing of the water of baptiſme is a ſign, by which they are declared to be animated by one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, as all the living members of Chriſt are, and conſequently that they are one with them, and that therefore they ought all of them to be both internally and externally as uſefull and helpfull to each other as poſſibly they can; But how you can draw ſuch a concluſion hence that therefore theſe individuals are no ways related to Chriſt but as they are thus united to one another I cannot underſtand for the reaſons before given.

The other text is *Eph.* 5. 22. where it is ſaid, *that Chriſt hath ſanctified* (or ſeparated) *his Church by the waſhing of water and the word,*

Very well! what of this? we grant you, that every Church member, if adult, is converted by the word, and afterward (if it may be) ought to be baptized; upon this account it is ſaid that the Church is ſeparated by water and the word, becauſe all its individual members are, or ought to be ſo converted and baptized. Therefore ſaith he, every individual Chriſtian is ſaved as incorporated into the Church. I deny the conſequence, for converſion by the word is antecedent to Baptiſme or to a Viſible Church State, and of it ſelf gives a title to Salvation, though never any ſuch viſible Church ſtate by baptiſme follows; But if Baptiſme follows, I ſay again, Chriſtians are not ſaved primarily as baptized and as externally Church members, but primarily as true believers and internally united to Chriſt. And certainly a

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believer, as ſuch, ſpeaks no neceſſary relation to any Church or viſible ſociety whatever, and therefore it could not poſſibly be the Apoſtles intendment in that place, or the other, to ſignifie that Chriſtians had no relation to Chriſt, or ſaving intereſt in him but what they derived from a participation of Baptiſme and a conjunction with a viſible Church,

Having thus finiſhed his proof, that all Chriſtians are members of the catholick viſible Church: he proceeds to the proof of the ſecond part of the propoſition, which is, *that therefore every Chriſtian is bound to joyn in external communion with the ſaid Church.* This he thinks is clear upon *two reaſons,* Firſt becauſe *without ſuch a conjunction the ends of Church ſociety cannot be obtained, which ends are the ſolemn worſhip of God, the publick profeſſion of our religion, and the mutual edification one of another.*

Secondly, *Becauſe without ſuch a conjunction in external communion with the Catholick viſible Church, we cannot be made partakers of the benefits and priviledges that Chriſt hath made over to the members of his Church, ſuch are the pardon of ſin, and the grace of the holy Spirit,* and ſo he concludes, *we have no promiſes of ſpiritual Graces but of thoſe means, ſo that in order to the partaking of them, there is an abſolute neceſſity laid upon us, of joyning and communicating with the* Church. Thus far he.

I anſwer, firſt, whereas he ſays that he *hath made it evident, that every Chriſtian, upon the account of his very being ſo, a member of the catholick viſible Church,* that I have already denied, and upon what grounds and reaſons I have denied it is before ſhewn, as for his conſequence that *therefore every Chriſtian is bound upon the very account of his being ſo, to joyn with the Church catholick viſible in external communion*: That I have alſo denyed and the reaſons why I have ſhewed, as Firſt, there is no ſuch external communion to be had with that vaſt body as the catholick Church is, beſides if there were, it might be unlawfull, becauſe if communion could not be had but upon ſinfull conditions, or without a manifeſt hazard of my ſalvation, or in caſe one were wrongfully excommunicated, there is in theſe caſes no obligation on a Chriſtian as ſuch to any ſuch external communion, but a Chriſtian may be ſtill a Chriſtian without it.

But let us ſee how he proves his conſequence: His firſt reaſon is, *becauſe without ſuch a conjunction the ends of Church ſociety cannot be had, which are ſolemn worſhip and mutual Edification.*

Anſ. What? not without a conjunction with the catholick viſible Church? certainly meetings for ſolemn worſhip and mutuall Edification are not terms wherein Chriſtians hold communion with the catholick viſible Church, for they are proper only to particular worſhiping congregations. I wonder in what Aſſemblies do the Chriſtians in *England*, and the Chriſtians in *Preſter Johns* country meet for ſolemn worſhip and mutual Edification? I know he thinks the matter is ſalved, by telling us, that Chriſtians meeting in any congregation in *England*, for worſhip and mutual Edification, do thereby hold externall communion in thoſe things with the whole Church throughout the world. But *I* conceive this will not ſerve his turn, without he could equally imagine how a man by holding communion with the City of *London* might be ſaid thereby to hold a civil external communion with all mankind, which I think is ſo wild a conceit as no man yet ever aſſerted, for he muſt remember he is ſpeaking of ſuch an external communion that is proper to a politick viſible Body, to the conſtituting of which kind of communion it is not enough to have the ſame laws, the ſame cuſtomes, no nor the ſame kind of ſolemn meetings for worſhip, to ſpeak all viſible Chriſtians to be of the ſame external politick communion; for ſuppoſe in *France* they had the ſame laws and cuſtoms, the ſame kind of officers, as Conſtables, Juſtices, Parliament, and a King, as we have in *England*, and all under the Government of the very ſame inviſible God, it doth not follow ſo long as there is no dependance of theſe Kingdomes each on the other, that therefore the people of *England* are of the ſame external politick communion with thoſe in *France*. Yea further, though theſe two Kingdoms may mutually in times of peace adviſe with each other for their mutual profits, and in caſe of differences betwixt them, they may forbid trading or converſe with each other, which is a kind of civil excommunication, yet for all this they may not be ſaid to be of the ſame external civil politick communion, and why? becauſe their reſpective Magiſtrates are independent and have no juriſdiction over each other. Upon the very ſame ground I deny any ſuch thing

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as an external Politick Communion betwixt the Members of the Catholick Church: for though they have all the ſame Laws, the ſame Sacraments, the ſame kind of ſolemn meetings for Worſhip, and all under the ſame kind of viſible Governours, and all this under the ſame inviſible Head the Lord Jeſus, though ſo far as they can, and the diſtances of places will admit) they may adviſe with each other for their mutual good, and in caſe that any prove Hereticks they may, ſo far as may be, diſown or refuſe Communion, as in the inſtances beforeſaid, yet all this no more proves them to be of the ſame external Politick communion, than the like agreements might ſpeak the Kingdom of *France* and that of *England* of the ſame politick civil communion, and why? but becauſe Chriſt hath left no viſible politick Head to have juriſdiction over the reſt.

If you ſay this notion ſpeaks a good word for the Headſhip of the Pope.

I Anſwer, no ſuch matter, for there is no need of ſuch a Head, nor of any ſuch external Politick Communion in the Church no more than in the World, God hath well enough Governed the World without any ſuch Univerſal civil Monarch, and doth as well govern the Church without any ſuch Univerſal viſible Head.

And now let us ſee what of force then is in his ſecond reaſon, which is this, ſuch a conjunction in external Communion with the Catholick viſible Church is neceſſary, *elſe we cannot poſſibly partake of the priviledges that Chriſt hath made over to this his Church, as the Remiſſion of Sins, and the Graces of the Holy Spirit.*

I Anſwer, He ſays that Chriſt hath made over the priviledges of pardon of ſin and the Graces of his Spirit to the Church primarily, and that before any particular perſon can partake of pardon of Sin and the Graces of the Spirit, he muſt joyn with the Church in external Communion. But how abſurd is all this! by Church he here means the Catholick viſible Church, but I wonder how it can be truly ſaid, that pardon of ſin, or the Graces of the Spirit can be ſaid to be made over to the viſible Church, as priviledges, when as it is very certain that Chriſt never made over ſuch priviledges to the Church as viſible?

But I perceive he underſtands it miniſterially, that is to ſay, that a man is pardoned, or partake of the Graces of the Spirit, but by the Miniſtry of the Church: well! let this be granted what will thence follow? I am ſure that will not follow which you ſay doth follow, that therefore we muſt firſt be made Members of the Church before we can be pardoned or ſanctifyed by the Spirit: for ſuppoſe the Church meets for ſolemn worſhip, and the miniſter is Preaching, and there comes in one or more Infidels for curioſity to ſee and hear, I hope you wil Inot ſay that theſe Infidels becauſe they are in the ſame place with the Church, that therefore they are joyned as Members with the Church; ſuppoſe now theſe Infidels are by the Sermon convinced and perfectly converted to a true Faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

I now demand, Theſe men that thus are converted, do they believe without or with the Grace of the Spirit? again ſo ſoon as they have believed, are they pardoned or are they not? I ſay they could not have believed without the Grace of the Spirit, and that ſo ſoon as they truly believed they were pardoned: and you dare not (I think) ſay the contrary. Now I pray you is not this Grace of the Spirit, and pardoning of ſin Communicated before theſe men were joyned to the Church as viſible Members. How then can you ſay that men are obliged to joyn with the Church as Members, elſe they have neither Grace nor pardon? the very Truth is, the primary reaſon of Chriſts inſtitution of viſible Church Memberſhip, was not for the giving of the firſt Grace of the Spirit, or giving pardon, but it was appointed as a means of conveying further degrees of Grace, and clearer aſſurance of pardon viſible Church Memberſhip doth ſuppoſe the Grace of converſion (in the adult) and pardon, but doth not give or Communicate it.

I had now done with his firſt Propoſition, but that for two inferences he draws from a conſideration of the whole; as firſt (ſaith he) *therefore their poſition is untrue, who maintain that our obligation to Church Communion ariſeth from a voluntary admiſſion of our ſelves into ſome particular congregation.*

But I ſay, notwithſtanding all he hath ſaid that poſition may be true, for he hath been all this while ſpeaking of the Univerſal viſible Church. But they that hold that poſition, maintain

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it only with reſpect to a particular Church, and I hope there is no contradiction, for one that believes and is Baptized to be neſſarily a Member of the Univerſal Church, and yet to be voluntarily a Member either of particular Worſhiping Congregation either in *England* or *Holland*.

His ſecond deduction is as wild, *for* (ſaith he) *hence we may ſee how extravagantly they diſcourſe that talk of Chriſtianity at large, without relation to a Church or Communion with a Society.* This I ſay is ſtrangely inferred, as if we could not diſcourſe of men, as men, without relation to Cities or Kingdoms, and certainly we may with a very good reaſon ſometimes diſcourſe of Chriſtians, as Chriſtians, without relation to any Church whether particular or Univerſal, and this without any *extravagancy*.

His ſecond Propoſition.

That every one is bound to joyn in Communion with the eſtabliſhed national Church to which he belongs, ſuppoſing there be nothing in the Terms of its Communion that renders it unlawful for him ſo to do.

This (he ſaith) *is plain, becauſe external Communion cannot be had with the Catholick Church but by externally Communionicating with ſome part of it.*

To this I have already anſwered, that there is no ſuch thing as an external Politick Communion to be had with the Catholick Church neither immediately which himſelf confeſſeth, no nor mediately by Communicating with ſome part of it, as I conceive I have made evident in my anſwer to the former Propoſition.

But in caſe any ſuch Communion could be had immediately or mediately, yet I would have it remembred, that this ſort of Communion is not to be ſought by every Chriſtian upon the very account of his being ſo, but upon the account of his being a viſible profeſſing Chriſtian.

And now let us come to ſome Iſſue, we will grant you that every Chriſtian, conſidered as viſible, ought to endeavour to joyn with

with ſome part of the Catholick viſible Church, for publick Worſhip and the edification of himſelf and others, but why this particular Church muſt be national, I do not underſtand, I am ſure there is no need it ſhould be national, for I do as truly declare my ſelf to be a viſible Member of the Catholick viſible Church, by joyning in external Communion with one ſingle viſible Congregation, as if I was united a Member to a National Church. But in very Truth, I do much doubt whether any ſuch thing is to be had as an external Communion with a National Church, any more than with the Catholick viſible Church: for you place *the Acts of external Communion to conſiſt in meeting together in ſolemn worſhip, and in mutual Edification.*

Now I would fain know where any Nation of Chriſtians do meet together for ſolemn Worſhip, true if you could find any Nation of Chriſtians that did often meet at one place to Worſhip God, and to rejoyce before the Lord together, as the Tribes of *Iſrael* uſed to do when they came up to *Jeruſalem* to keep the Feaſts of the Lord, I ſhould not ſtick to call ſuch a National Church united external Communion, but to ſpeak of a joyning with a National Church of Chriſtians in external Communion, where Millions of the Members of the ſuppoſed National Church, never perhaps came nigh one the other for ſcores of Miles, eſpecially ſo as to Hear, or Pray, or receive the Supper together, or to Edifie each other, is to talk without any ſolid ground.

If you ſay, but if we joyn with any one Worſhipping Congregation in external Communion, we do thereby joyn with the whole Nation of Chriſtians in external Communion.

If you ſay ſo, I think you ſay more than you can prove, for I do not underſtand that becauſe I Worſhip God with a Congregation in *London*, that therefore I Worſhip God with a Congregation at *York*. True, by my Worſhipping at *London* I do declare my ſelf to be of the ſame Faith with thoſe that Worſhip at *York*, and I am therefore bound to account of them as my brethren, and ſo to love and Pray for them as ſuch, by which means an internal Communion is maintained as among Members that are ſuppoſed and hoped to be united to Chriſt, but yet I am to ſeek how this external Communion can be had, when perhaps we ſhall never ſee each other as long as we live.

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If you ſay that all the Chriſtians in a Nation may hold an external Communion in being all under one Diſcipline, the management whereof being depoſited in the hands of one viſible Head, as was the High Prieſt to the Church of the Jews.

This indeed were ſomething, if it could be proved that Jeſus Chriſt did ever appoint ſuch an Officer for the Government of all his Diſciples in each Nation, but if it be made to appear that all Miniſters or Paſtors of particular Worſhiping Congregations, have equal Power to Govern their reſpective Churches, and that they have no Power of juriſdiction one over another, and that there is no inſtituted Officers appointed by Chriſt Superior to them, with any Power of juriſdiction over them. Then I ſay, there can be no ſuch external Communion of all Chriſtians in a Nation under the juriſdiction of any ſuch High Prieſt, and that therefore there is no ſuch thing as a National Church of Chriſtians, wherewith an external communion can be held. You know well who they are that are for an equality of Paſtoral Power.

Many more things may be ſaid of this matter, but I ſhall at preſent wave them, and proceed to conſider what he further ſaith.

He hath already ſaid, that every Chriſtian ought to joyn in external Communion with a National Church, that thereby he might hold Communion with the Catholick. But preſently he ſtarts an Objection.

But it may be ſaid, that there may be ſeveral diſtinct Churches in the place where we live, there may be the fixed regular Aſſemblies of the National Church, and there may be ſeparate Congregations, both which are or pretend to be parts of the Catholick Church, ſo that it may be all one as to our Communicating with that, which of theſe we joyn with, ſuppoſing we joyn but with one of them, and conſequently there is no neceſſity from that principle that we ſhould hold Communion with the Aſſemblies of the National Church. So far he----

Anſw. Very good! now let us ſee how he anſwers it, which part of the Argument in the Objection doth he deny? doth he deny ſuch ſeparate Congregations to be parts of the Catholick Church? or doth he deny that in joyning with any part of the

Catholick Church we thereby joyn with the whole? he denies neither: Then I ſay he grants the whole, for theſe two being granted, the concluſion follows, that they who joyn with thoſe ſeparate Congregations do thereby preſerve the Catholick Union; and therefore there is no need of joyning with a National Church to attain the end propoſed, What ſaith he now? He ſeems not to deny this, but tells us *that notwithſtanding if we ſeparate or refuſe Communion with them, that we do not preſerve the Unity of the Body, ſo far as in us lies, which the Fundamental Laws of Society, and the expreſſe precepts of Chriſtianity require of every Member.*

Anſw. I would now fain know of him what are thoſe Fundamental Laws of Society, as ſuppoſe of Kingdomes or Corporations, that oblige its Subjects or Citizens to ſeek the Unity and Peace of thoſe Societies any further than to be obedient to the known Laws of the ſaid Kingdoms; and the orders of Corporations regulated by the Charters granted by their Princes? but if any inferiour Officers of Kingdoms or Corporations, ſhall impoſe Laws upon the Subjects or Citizens, that are not agreeable to, but rather ſeem contrary to the Laws of the Kingdom, and the Power granted in thoſe Charters, if ſuch Subjects or Citizens oppoſe and refuſe ſubjection, and will not communicate in thoſe things; who dare ſay that ſuch do not ſeek the Peace of Kingdoms and Corporations as much as in them lies? or as much as is fit?

And let him likewiſe tell us what are thoſe expreſſe precepts of Chriſtianity, that oblige its Members any further to ſeek the Unity of the Church, than to believe, do, and obſerve thoſe things which Chriſt the Head of his Church hath commanded. Chriſtians then ſeek the Unity of the Body, (ſo far as in them lies,) when they ſeek it according to a Goſpel rule; for it doth not lye in their Power to ſeek it any other ways.

But (ſaith he) *to ſeparate from Congregations with whom we may lawfully Communicate, is not to ſeek the Unity of the Body, ſo far as in us lies.*

Anſw. This is not univerſally true, for what if one ſhifteth his Habitation to another Pariſh, for the benefit of the Labours of a more Pious Miniſter? here is a ſeparation from an eſtabliſh-

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ed Aſſembly, and yet no breach upon the Unity of the Body.

But ſuppoſe one ſtill abides in the Pariſh, and yet conſtantly Hears and Communicates with a Church of an other Pariſh, as I ſuppoſe ſome of your own do, how can you ſay ſuch (ſo long as they continue Communion with your National Church) ſeek not the Union of the Body as far as is fit or needful.

If you ſay but neither of theſe are the caſes of thoſe you ſpeak of, becauſe they hold Communion with you to be ſinful.

Very true; and you deny not, that in caſe they could not Communicate with you without ſin, but that they may lawfully ſeparate without being guilty of any breach of union.

If you had here proved they might hold Communion with you without ſin, or what they extreamly ſuſpect to be ſinful, you had ſaid ſomething: but ſince you have reſerved your pretended proof thereof to the fourth Propoſition, I ſhall therefore referre my anſwer thereto.

His third Propoſition.

That the being a Member of any Church, doth oblige a man to ſubmit to all the Laws and Conſtitutions of that Church.

I Anſwer, if by Laws and Conſtitutions he underſtands ſuch that Chriſt, either by himſelf, or his Apoſtles hath ordained, ſuch as to meet together to Pray, Praiſe, Preach, Hear, Baptize, or Eat the Lords Supper, or to Admoniſh, Comfort, Reprove, or caſt out the Obſtinate: ſo I grant the Truth of the Propoſition.

But if by Laws and Conſtitutions he means ſuch that are meerly of mens deviſing and impoſing under the penalty of Excommunication, without any command from Chriſt for ſo doing: of which kind are the Obſervations of Days, Abſtaining from Meats, Croſſing in Baptiſm, Kneeling at the Supper, Reading Prayers, and that in a Surplice; without the uſe and obſervation whereof it ſhall not be lawful for men to Preach the Goſpel, or partake of the Sacrament, but for refuſal ſhall be caſt out and

not esteemed worthy of the name of Christians. In this sence I say the proposition is very false.

And whereas he saith, that this Proposition is in the general so unquestionable, that no sober man will deny it: I on the contrary say, that in the general (without a sound limitation) it is so mischievous that no sober man but may be ashamed to assert it. For who will deny but that our Saviour with his Apostles were of the Church of the Jews and who dares say, that either Christ, or they thought themselves obliged to observe the humane Laws, and Traditions of that Church; either in washing before Meat, or in not Healing on the Sabbath-day, which Traditions they made no scruple to transgresse, and to justifie such Transgression, to the shame and confusion of their Imposers. Again, who knows not that the Rulers of the Jewish Church had agreed, and so made it a Constitution of that Church, that if any confessed Christ he should be cast out of the Synagogue: and what Christian hath the Forehead to say, that all the Members of that Church were obliged thereby not to confesse Christ, or to bear any part in casting out such (as did confesse him) from their Synagogues.

He adds, this is the Basis upon which all Societies are founded, and by which they do subsist.

He means that the Truth of that Proposition is at the bottom of all Societies, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical; but I pray how is it the Basis of Kingdoms which are civil Societies. Thus far I grant, that all the just Laws Enacted by the supream Power in such Kingdoms, do oblige all the Subjects. Answerably, all the Laws and Constitutions in the Church, that are Enacted by Jesus Christ its supream King and Governour, do bind all the Members. But in civil Societies, if the Inferiour Magistrates, as suppose the Heads of Corporations shall Enact Laws and make Constitutions and bind them on the Subjects so as in case of refusal to submit, they shall be deprived of the right and priviledges of Subjects, and that without any Authority from the supreme Power for so doing; I say in this case, that this Proposition is so far from being the Basis of these Societies, without which they cannot subsist: that I say, it's the Basis of all Confusion to such Societies, answerably, if any Officers

ficers of Churches ſhall preſume without warrant from Chriſt, to make Laws and bind them on the Diſciples necks, upon the penalties of depriving them of the rights and priviledges of Chriſtians, as they do by excommunication, I ſay this is a meer uſurpation of the Regall power of Chriſt, and tends directly to run Churches into confuſion and all manner of diſorders as the ſad Effects thereof do cleerly demonſtrate. And whereas he ſaith, "To ſuppoſe a Society, and yet to ſuppoſe the members of it "not under an obligation to obey its Laws and Government, is "to make Ropes of ſand, and to ſuppoſe a body without ſinews "and ligaments to hold the parts together. I Anſwer, That tis confeſſed, that the juſt Laws of the ſupream Authority of any Society, are Sinews and Ligaments of that Society; But if the Laws be either unjuſt or impoſed by any Authority inferiour to the Supream, ſuch Laws are not the natural ſinews in any Government, but are certain Monſtroſities in the body politick, as ſuch kind of Sinews or Ligaments in the body naturall are reputed, which are not neceſſary or uſefull but are Impediments to a regular motion of the members, and of this kind are the Laws and Conſtitutions of Churches about which we contend.

Well, but let us ſee how he clears this, he further ſaith *pag.* 16. "It muſt be acknowledged in the firſt place, that the Church "muſt (as all other Societies) be entruſted with at leaſt ſo much "power over her ſubjects as is neceſſary for the ſecuring of her "own welfare and preſervation: For to think otherwiſe is to "ſuppoſe God to have founded a Church and Intended the well "being and continuance of it (which are things that every one "muſt grant) and yet to ſuppoſe he hath denyed her the uſe of "the means without which the well being and continuance can "not be attained; which is monſtrous and contradictious.

It is plain, that the Author ſpeaks here of a particular Church, as may be ſeen by a review of the propoſition, where he ſpeaks of a membership with any Church, i. e. with any particular Church, and now I anſwer, Firſt,

This Argument proceedeth upon an Hypotheſis, that is not neceſſarily true, as the Author imagineth, *viz.* that God in cauſing this or that particular Church to be planted, muſt needs Intend its continuance; for many ſuch Churches have been planted

but not continued, and certainly when it hath so hapned, it hath not been besides the intention of God.

Perhaps you will say, that was through their own fault by not making use of that power that God gave them to preserve themselves, say you so? what then say you to the Church of Christ first planted at *Jerusalem*? we read, *Acts* 8. 1. 2. that a great persecution arose, and they were all scattered, and none left at *Jerusalem* except the Apostles. (And it is as easie to conceive that the Apostles might have been scattered as the rest:) I ask now, was this Church continued? or if it was not, was it because they made not use of that power, that God intrusted them with for their preservation? what would you have had them done? what, repelled force with force? I know you believe no such power was intrusted with them, and yet it's certain that this dispersion was not besides the intention of God, therefore it is not necessary as you suppose, that God must always intend the preservation of every particular Church he causeth to be planted.

But in the next place let us grant your supposition, that God intends the continuance of every Church he causeth to be planted, what then? you say then, he must needs intrust the said Churches with so much power, that is necessary to preserve themselves, or else he is wanting to them.

I deny your consequence, because since a Church may be broken and so discontinued, as well by Armed Force from Persecutors, as by Intestine Broyls arising from Heresies and Schismes: God must then necessarily have provided every particular Church with an Army, Superior to all the power of Persecutors, or else have ingaged himself to work miracles for their preservation, or else according to you, he must be thought wanting to his Churches, But since God hath neither provided the one, nor engaged himself to the other, it is certain your Consequence taken universally cannot be true.

Perhaps you will say if the Consequence be not universally true, yet it is as to the particulars of Heresies and Schismes that arise out of the Church: For if God had not provided the Church with so much power as is necessary to suppresse those evills, he must be wanting in providing means for the Churches preservation

on. I Anſwer, that will be ſoon ſeen, if we conſider all that power that God hath truly given his Churches to keep them from theſe evils, which are ſo far as I underſtand, the Bible, and Miniſters, and the promiſe of the Spirit, to guide them that ſincerely Implore his Aid and Aſſiſtance. Now its true theſe means are ſufficient, and as much in their kind as is neceſſary, yet they are not of themſelves ſufficient, except Miniſters and People make a good uſe of them. For in caſe either the one or the other do ſinfully neglect the ſtudying of the Bible, and praying earneſtly for the guidance of the Spirit; it is very poſſible and eaſie for either of them to lapſe into Hereſies and Schiſmes, as many Churches have done, and yet when they ſo do, the have not to blame God for not intending their continuance, nor for not affording what means are in their kind ſufficient for their continuance. For the fault is their own in not making a due uſe and improvement of the means afforded.

I know the Author is dreaming of other ſorts of means Entruſted with the Church for the preventing the deſtruction thereof by Hereſies and Schiſmes, and that is of a power of determining Controverſies in points of doctrine, and of making Laws and Ordinances for the ſuppreſſing Schiſmes, ſo at leaſt as to oblige the members to acquieſce, which are different from ſtudying the Bible, praying for the Spirit, and to add a Living up to what they know.

But by his leave, I will be bold to tell him, that ſuch a power of determining controverſies, is not a ſure means of it ſelf to prevent Hereſies, for what if the Paſtors themſelves, by a neglect of thoſe means I named, ſhould lapſe into Hereſies, it is certain if they came to determine, they would Eſtabliſh Hereſies, and not root them up. Nor is that power of making Laws and Canons to oblige all members to acquieſce in any ſure means to prevent or to put an end to Schiſmes, for except the members of the Church, are aſſured that what their Paſtors determine in doctrine, and what they would by Cannon oblige them to, in matters of worſhip, be agreeable to the word of God, they may juſtly make no ſcruple to diſſent in the one and the other. True indeed, if Governours of Churches could make out ſuch a power they pretend to, that they have received it from God, and that they

are

are infallibly guided, as the *Pope* and *Quakers* pretend in all their determinations, then somewhat indeed were spoken to the purpose, and the People would see some ground to take them for Oracles, and to stoop to their determinations, but till then it is best for Governours of Churches to leave the People to their Bibles, and to presse nothing upon them as necessary, but what they find to be Evidently there written and commanded.

But no more of this as yet, for I have herein almost prevented my self in what I have to say as to that which follows.

He proceeds thus, " That since the preservation of a Church " cannot be secured, but by a providing for a due and orderly " performance of the worship of God, and by maintaining " peace and unity among its members, it necessarily follows in " Generall, that whatever power over her subjects is necessary " in order to either of these things, all that at least must be sup- " posed to be Lodged in the Church, that is to say, in those that " have the Government of it.

I answer, If you mean hereby that Jesus Christ hath by directions and precepts provided what is necessary for the due and orderly performance of Gods worship, and likewise for the preserving his Churches in peace and Unity, and that he hath in a special manner intrusted those directions and precepts with the Pastors of Churches, to teach and command the Churches to worship God according to these directions, and to keep unity among themselves, and likewise to reprove and censure the obstinate, according to the said directions and precepts; so I yield the whole of what is said. But if you mean thereby that Christ hath intrusted the Governours of Churches with an Arbitrary power, to institute such things for a pretended due and orderly worship, which neither were in use with Christ and his Apostles or those first Churches, or that are no ways necessary in themselves, but are at least seemingly contrary to the Genius of a Gospell-worship, which is Eminently spirituall, and to presse these under the penalties of Excommunication, as if the Churches could not duely and orderly worship God, and be kept in unity without them. In this sence I deny that any such power is to be supposed to be Lodged in the Governours of the Church, for it is a power altogether useless and impertinent, and in the conse-

 quence

quence destructive: For Christ and his Apostles, and those first Churches worshipped God, and kept unity in a more excellent manner than we do, and yet without the use of these humanely invented things that you Impose.

He goes on, "From hence (saith he) it is plain that the "Church hath a power to restrain the exercise of her Subjects "Liberty, as to oblige them to all such Laws, Rules, Orders, "Ceremonies, as she shall Establish for the ends aforesaid.

I answer, When you have either better proved the necessity or real usefullness of the laws, rules, ceremonies to the ends aforesaid, or that Christ hath given any such power to the said Governours which hitherto you have but meerly beg'd, then I will yeild to what you say as true, But otherwise it is but a poor naked Lanck Assertion that stands by it self unproved, and so I leave it.

But as to what he adds, "And if it be Questioned whether her "Appointments do indeed conduce to that end; of that she her "self is to be Judge, her members being no farther concerned "therein than onely before they obey her Impositions to see that "they be not repugnant to the known Laws of God.

I Answer, First let it be considered, that he grants a Judgment of discretion to the people, antecedent to, and a ground of their Obedience to such Laws, upon this I say it will follow, that if the members upon searching the Scriptures, and praying to God for his Spirit to direct them, are left after such a search under strong perswasions that the very making such Laws, and appointing such Ceremonies, and binding them on the disciples necks, under the penalties of Excommunication, is a meer usurpation, and that those Ceremonies themselves are of such a low, carnall, beggerly consideration, extreamly ill suited to the manly State of the Church, and the Spirituality of a Gospel worship. I say if upon these and other considerations they continue strongly perswaded, that both the one, and the other, are thus repugnant to the Will and Law of Christ, it will be the members duty in such a case to disobey. It will not here be sufficient for you to say, but they are mistaken, there is no such real repugnancy as they Imagine: For since you leave them to be Judges, whether there is or is not, it is but equall that those you leave to be

Judges, that they ſhould be left to act according to their judgements in ſuch a caſe as this is, which you yield to fall under their cogniſance. And the truth is, if you will not yield ſuch a Liberty of judgment as this is, you muſt bid them put out their eyes, and follow their Leaders in a blind Obedience, and in caſe their Leaders be blind alſo you would there in direct them to an excellent expedient how they may come all to fall into the Ditch.

He Infers again, "Hence it will follow that the Church muſt "be furniſhed with a power, to end and determine controverſies "of Religion, that ariſe among its members, that is to ſay, to "give an Authoritative deciſion of them as that all parties are "bound to acquieſce in it, elſe ſhe could not preſerve her ſelf in "peace and unity.

What you ſay here, may be differently underſtood, according to the nature of the points about which the controverſie is, if the matters of difference or controverſie be ſuch as may be held by both ſides, without any conſiderable damage to either of their Solutions, then I grant (that if Church Governours determine as the Apoſtle you confeſſe *pag.* 1. doth) that thoſe differing parties ſhould remember each other as brethren, and Communicate with each other as ſuch, forbearing to cenſure each other, as being the Lords ſervants to whom they muſt ſtand or fall, that the members ought to acquieſce in this their determination.

But in caſe that Church Governours ſhall ſide with one party, and with them ſhall (contrary to the ſaid rule and practice of the Apoſtle) endeavour to force by their determination, the other party to do and ſay as they do, or elſe to excommunicate them; I ſay in this caſe, theſe Governours uſurp an Authority to themſelves above and beyond what the Apoſtle had, or thought fit to exerciſe. And Likewiſe that it is not the Duty of the party ſo Impoſed upon, to ſubmit contrary to what they conceive to be the Will of God in that caſe. For he that doth or ſaith any thing againſt his doubting Conſcience, is in the ſame Condition of Damnation, as he that doubteth and eateth, which the Apoſtle Inſtanceth in. If the points of Controverſie be about ſuch matters where thoſe that hold on one ſide do Eſpouſe ſuch doctrines or ways of worſhip that are of very dangerous Conſequence

ſequence to the Salvation of their Souls, (ſuch are they that are eſpouſed by *Arians, Socinians, Papiſts*) I ſay In theſe inſtances, if Church Governours determine on the right ſide, according to the plain Revelations of Gods word in Scriptures; the Members are bound to acquieſce therein, but not meerely becauſe of their determination, but becauſe their determinations are founded on the Revelations of God, but in caſe the ſaid Governours ſhould, contrary to the ſaid Revelations, determine on the wrong ſide, that is to ſay, for the *Socinians, Arrians, Papiſts,* I ſay then, the Members were not obliged to acquieſce in theſe determinations, notwithſtanding all the pretences of Unity and Peace that may be obtained thereby.

The Author being ſenſible that what he laſt ſaid, if taken in the utmoſt extent of its ſignification, would be dangerous, begins to limit his ſence thereof; and indeed it is but high time he ſhould.

Here (ſaith he) *it may be taken notice, that this Power of ending Controverſies, which we aſcribe to the Church; doth not imply any Authority over our Judgements, or that in virtue thereof ſhe can oblige us to give an inward aſſent to her determinations, any further than ſhe gives us evidence for the Truth of them; which is that extravagant Power the Church of* Rome *doth challenge to her ſelf.*

So far we are agreed; he adds, but our practices that ſhe can oblige us to ſubmit ſo far to her definitions, as not to act any thing contrary to them: this is abſolutely neceſſary to prevent the over running of Hereſies, and the embroyling the Church in infinite quarrels and Controverſies to the deſtruction of the publick Peace.

I anſwer, firſt by conceſſion I grant according to this, here is good Proviſion made for the Purity and Peace of the Church ſo long as the Governours determine on the right ſide; But in caſe they determine on the wrong, it is then ſo bad an expedient to prevent Hereſies that I do not know a more effectuall tool, for the overſpreading the Church with them than this is, for in caſe they determine for *Socinians, Arrians, Popery,* you ſay that the Members are obliged as to their practice though not as to their Judgements to Acquieſce in the ſaid determinations. I confeſſe herein you have ſhewed a great care of preſerving a

Peace, but what a Peace is it? not a Peace of the Church of Christ, but the Peace of a confederacy or conspiracy against the true Church of Christ.

But if this were true, then in the times of the predominancy of *Arianisme*, when some hundreds of *Arian* Bishops met in Councel and determined wickedly against the Deity of Christ, it had been the Duty of *Athanasius* to have kept his judgement in that point to himself, and never to have declared against that abomination, for fear of disturbing the Peace of the Church; and as for *Wickliffe*, *Husse*, *Hierome* of *Prague*, and afterwards *Luther*, they were all Peace breakers, in declaring against the abominable opinions and Antichristian Faith of the Church of *Rome*, they ought all of them to have kept their Judgements to themselves, and so to have acquiesced in the determinations of that wicked Church: Or when *Jeroboam* Apostatized and set up two Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and commanded the people there to Worship; they ought onely to have kept their judgements to themselves, but other wise to have conformed in outward practice to the instituted Worship, which to say, is contrary to the Judgement of God in that case who commended his 7000 in *Israel* that bowed not the knee to *Baal*, the commendation was, that they neither conformed in Judgement nor practice.

If it be said, that the Authour only meant that such determinations only obliged the practice, Negatively; that is to say, that the Members are thereby bound not to practise any thing contrary to them.

Very good let that be his meaning, now I would fain know what are those acts wherein Members may be said to practise contrary to such determinations? what if they withdraw and refuse Communion with such a Church that holds to such determinations; is this to be reputed a practising any thing to the contrary? if it be, then so did those 7000 Israelites and yet are commended for so doing: if so to withdraw may not be thought to be an acting contrary, inasmuch as the Peace may be kept notwithstanding such a withdrawing, then do you ill (according to your own principles) to compell under penalties, all dissenters to conform to you, since the Peace may be preserved notwithstanding their Non-conformity and withdrawing.

But

But yet again, may a publick declaration by word of Mouth or Writing, be judged an acting contrary to such determinations? I doubt not but you think it so to be.

Then I demand, when the People of *Israel* met together at the tryal by Sacrifice, whether God or *Baal* was the true God, says *Elisha* to them, why halt you betwixt *Jehova* and *Baal*? if God be God, follow him; if *Baal*, follow him. Here the people were left to their choice, to conclude upon the Worshipping of which God they were convinced to be the true God, by that tryal. In conclusion, the People being throughly convinced by a miracle that *Jehova* (and not *Baal*) was the true God: They publickly by word of mouth declared *Jehovah* he is God, *Jehovah* he is God. I ask, was this declaration an acting contrary to the established Worship of the Land? if it was, then according to you, it was unlawful and contrary to the Peace of that corrupt Church, for they ought to have stood mute, and kept their Judgements to themselves for fear of disturbing the Peace of *Baals* Worshipers.

Perhaps you will say this was an extraordinary case, for a miracle was here wrought by a great Prophet, which gave a virtual warrant to the People for such a declaration, though contrary to the Peace of the Church. I answer, the immediate reason of this acclamation was the conviction of their judgements that *Jehovah* was the onely true God; the remote cause was the miracle wrought by the Prophet, which was the cause of the conviction, so that the immediate warrant for that acclamation, was their conviction; the remote warrant for it was the miracle: now I ask you if there be the same degree, or a sufficient degree of conviction in any other people, that this or that decision of Governours of Churches be clearly against the mind of God, though the reason of the conviction be not a miracle wrought in their presence, but a consideration of what is evidently declared in the Bible, that in its time had the confirmation of many miracles wrought by a greater than *Elisha*, even by the Son of God; whether this conviction so wrought gives not as good and ample Authority to either Ministers or People, to declare by Word of Mouth or Writing against such decisions of Church Governours, which have determined evidently against plain

plain Revelations, as this People of *Israel* had for this their publick declaration? which if granted, then I say, there is no such obligation that lies upon Church Members to acquiesce in the unrighteous decisions of Church Governours, so as not to act or practise contrary there to, which you have affirmed, and I have denyed, and let the Reader judge which hath the better reason of his side for what either of us say, and thus have I answered to the third Proposition.

His Fourth Proposition.

That we can have no just cause of withdrawing our Communion from the Church, whereof we are Members, but when we cannot Communicate with it, without the Commission of sin.

In this Proposition he speaks of Christians as supposed to be in actual Fellowship with some visible Church; by Church he understands either some particular Worshiping Congregation, or a National Church, as for this latter notion of a Church when he hath shewed us, that it was, or is the will of Christ, that all the Christians in every Nation should after the manner of the Jews, be united under the same visible Head of High Priest, and that the great body of the Nation should meet by his command, at one place, as the Jews at the Temple of *Jerusalem* for publick Worship, then I confesse he will have some colour for asserting of National Christian Churches, and of a National Membership therein, but till then I shall take the boldness to deny that any Christian is capable of any such National Church Membership.

But if he doth here mean by Church a particular Worshiping Congregation, such are the parochial Churches of *England*, and such are the Congregations of Non-conformists, then we shall consider what he further saith, which is this, *That no Christians can have just cause of withdrawing Communion from the Church whereof they are Members*, if we should understand it indifferently of Non-conformists Churches as parochial, the meaning would be, that no Member that either is joyn'd to the one

one or the other, have juſt cauſe to withdraw Communion from either of them, but when &c.

If you ſay that the parochial Churches are the true regular Churches, becauſe eſtabliſhed by the Law of the Land; and all other are Schiſmaticall: I anſwer, this is ſooner ſaid than proved, for did the regularity or Schiſmaticalneſſe of a Church depend on ſuch an externall fickle conſideration as the Law of the Land, then might one and the ſame Church be Regular or Schiſmatical as often as the wind of the *Legiſlative* power might chance to Change; ſo that an Act of Parliament, that makes the Epiſcopal Churches regular to day, the very ſame Churches by a change of an Act might be made Schiſmatical to morrow; and ſo if the *Legiſlative* Power pleaſed, both Epiſcopal, Independant, Presbyterian, Anabaptiſtical Churches may be regular and Schiſmatical in their turns.

Laſtly, when you ſay no Communion may juſtly be with drawn from, but when it cannot be continued without the Commiſſion of ſin, here again, I deſire to know whether by ſin you mean ſuch that may be evidenced to be ſuch, to the conviction of the impoſers; or only ſuch that is evidenced to the conviction of the Conſciences of thoſe that withdraw? you cannot in reareaſon require the firſt, except you will run your ſelves upon theſe ſtraits, either to turn Papiſts, or undertake to convince the Papiſts, that the reaſon why you came off from them and their Worſhip, was becauſe you could not Communicate with them therein without ſin, we know you tell them ſo, and give yours reaſons why you ſay ſo, but notwithſtanding all you ſay they are not convinced, but yet perſiſt to call you Schiſmaticks. But what then? are you moved with their cenſure? no, for if your reaſons will not convince them: yet they ſatisfie your own Conſciences, and therein you reſt, and ſo you may very reaſonably do.

I deſire now but the like equity for the Non-conformiſts, and that is, that if they have reaſons ſufficient to convince their own Conſciences, that the things impoſed are ſinful though their reaſons convince not their impoſers, that you would give them that liberty of Acquieſcing therein, as you take in bearing up your ſelves againſt the Cenſures of the Papiſts.

But

But yet further, What though the things Impoſed be not clearly evidenced to their own Conſciences, but onely ſo far as to leave them under ſtrong ſuſpitions that they are ſinfull? it is ſufficient to juſtifie their withdrawing; for what if the things Impoſed on the *Non-conformiſts* were ſuch as they might as lawfully do or practiſe, as the Chriſtian Jews might have eaten of the once-forbidden meats? yet ſo long as their doubts remain, if they ſhould ſo practiſe they would ſin, as the Jews would have done if they had eaten ſo long as their ſcruple remained: And ſo that unqueſtionable Caſuiſt, the Apoſtle, determines in the caſe *Rom.* 14. 14. *For I know, and am perſwaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean in it ſelf, yet to him who thinks any thing unclean, to him it is unclean.* So again, *He that doubteth and eateth is Damned.* And if it were not to light up Candles while the Sun ſhines, I would tell you, that a meer ſuſpition of a ſin, is a ſufficient ground for withdrawing Communion, in the Judgments of other very great men.

So ſays that univerſally admired man, Mr. *Hales*, of Schiſme, *pag.* 8. ſays he, "In theſe Schiſmes which concern Fact, nothing 'can be a juſt cauſe of refuſing Communion, but onely to require 'the execution of ſome unlawful or ſuſpected Act. For not on-'ly in Reaſon, but in Religion too, that maxime admits of no 'releaſe. *Cautiſſimi cujuſque preceptum quod dubitas nefeceris*, 'To load, *ſaith he*, our publick Formes with private phantaſies, '(upon which we differ) is the moſt Soveraign way to perpetu-'ate Schiſme unto the Worlds end. Prayer, Confeſſion, Thanks-'giving, Reading the Scriptures, in the plaineſt and ſimpleſt 'manner, were matter enough to furniſh out a ſufficient Liturgy, 'though nothing either of private opinion, or of Church Pomp, 'of Garments or preſcribed Geſtures, of Imagery, of Muſick, or 'of many other Superfluities which creep into the Church under 'the name of Order and Decency, did interpoſe it ſelf. To 'charge Churches and Liturgies with things unneceſſary, was 'the firſt beginning of all Superſtition; and when ſcruple of Con-'ſcience began to be made, or pretended, there Schiſme began 'to break in he goes on, If the ſpiritual Guides of the Church 'would be a little ſpareing of incumbering Churches with ſuper-'fluities, &c. there would be far leſſe Cauſe of Schiſme or Su-'perſtition

'perſtition, and all the inconveniences were likely to enſue, 'would be but this, they ſhould in ſo doing yeild a little to the 'imbecillity of their Inferiours, a thing which St. *Paul* would 'never have refuſed to do, Mean while I pray mark this, where-'ſoever falſe or ſuſpected opinions, are made a piece of Church 'Liturgie, he that ſeparates is not the Schiſmatick, for it is alike 'unlawfull, to make a profeſſion of known or ſuſpected falſe-'hood, as to put in practice unlawful or ſuſpected actions,

And of this mind is Dr. *Stillingfleet*, a Perſon no whit inferior to the other, whoſe words are theſe, in his *Iren. p.* 117. "Where 'any Church retaining purity of Doctrine, doth require the 'owning of, and conforming to, any unlawful or ſuſpected 'practice, men may lawfully deny Conformity to, and Com-'munion with that Church in ſuch things, without incurring the 'guilt of Schiſme; which becauſe I know it may meet with ſome 'oppoſition, from thoſe men who will ſooner call men Schiſma-'ticks than prove them ſo; I ſhall offer this reaſon for it to con-'ſideration; if our ſeparation from the Church of *Rome*, was 'therefore lawfull becauſe ſhe required unlawfull things as 'conditions of her Communion, then wherever ſuch things 'are required of any Church, Non-communion with that Church 'in thoſe things, will be lawfull too: and where Non-commu-'nion is Lawfull, there can be no Schiſme in it.

"If it be ſaid here, that the *Popes* power was a uſurpation, 'which is not in Lawfull Governours of Churches, it is ſoon re-'plyed, that the *Popes* uſurpation, mainly lies in impoſing 'things upon mens Conſciences as neceſſary, which are doubt-'full or unlawfull: And wherever the ſame thing is done, there 'is an Uſurpation of the ſame nature, though not in ſo high a 'degree; and it may be as Lawfull to withdraw Communion 'from one, as well as the other. If it be ſaid, that men are 'bound to be ruled by their Governours, in determining what 'things are Lawfull, and what not: To this it is Anſwered, firſt, 'No true Proteſtant can ſwear blind obedience to Church Go-'vernours in all things: It is the higheſt uſurpation, to rob men 'of the Liberty of their Judgments. That which we plead for 'againſt the Papiſts, is, that all men have their eyes in their 'heads as well as the *Pope*, that every one hath a *Judicium pri-*

'*vatæ discretionis*, which is the rule of practice as to himself, 'and though we freely allow a Ministerial power under Christ, 'in the Governours of the Church, yet that extends not to an ob- 'ligation upon men to go against the dictates of their own rea- 'son and Conscience, &c. A man hath not the power over his 'own understanding, much lesse can others have it. *Nullus cre-* 'dit aliquid esse verum quia vult credere id esse verum, *non est in* 'potestate hominis facere aliquid apparere intellectui suo verum 'quando voluerit. Either therefore men are bound to obey 'Church Governours in all things, Absolutely, without Re- 'striction or Limitation, (which if it be not usurpation and do- 'minion over others Faith in them, and the worst of implicit Faith 'in others, it is hard to define what either of them is) or else 'if they be bound to obey onely in Lawfull things, I then en- 'quire, who must be Judge what things are Lawfull, and what 'not? if the Governours still, then the power will be Abso- 'lute again, for to be sure whatever they command, they will 'say is lawfull, either in its self or as they Command it. If e- 'very private person must judge what is Lawfull, and what not, 'which is Commanded, (as when all is said, every man will be 'his own Judge in this case, in things concerning his own wel- 'fare) then he is no further bound to obey, than he Judges the 'thing to be Lawfull which is Commanded. The plea of an er- 'roneous Conscience takes not off the obligation to follow the di- 'ctates of it, for as he is bound to lay it down, supposing it Er- 'roneous, so he is bound not to go against it, while it is not laid 'down.

These testimonies are so clear, and backt with such unanswer- able reason, that I shall now not scruple to qualifie the proposi- on under consideration thus, that where the commission of sin, (so saith he, I add or the doing any thing that is suspected to be sinfull,) is required as the condition of Communion, there a withdrawing is Lawfull and not at all Schismatical.

Having thus given an account of these different sences, in which both he and I do understand the several parts of this proposition, I shall now come to examine what he hath said for the confirma- tion thereof.

There

There are (ſaith he, p. 19.) *but two caſes wherein it can be Lawfull to withdraw Communion from a Church; one is, when the Church requires of us, as a Condition of her Communion, an acknowledgment and profeſſion of that to be truth, which we know to be an errour; the other is, when ſhe requires of us the joyning with her in ſome Practice which we know to be againſt the Laws of God.*

Though I will not be ſo confident to ſay with this Author that only in theſe two caſes it may be Lawfull to withdraw Communion, for there may be a third and a fourth, which neither he nor I may at preſent think of. Yet ſo far I agree with him, that theſe two caſes mentioned are juſt cauſes of withdrawing Communion. But whereas he ſaith, that the errour muſt be known to be ſuch, and the practice known to be againſt the Law of God, to that I ſay, that knowledge implyes certainty. But I ſay if the errours and practices be but ſuſpected, ſo as the Conſcience doth but doubt, it is ſufficient: as I have proved from the Apoſtle, and the teſtimonies and reaſons of Mr. *Hales*, and Dr. *Stillingfleet*. This being premiſed, I ſhall now proceed to a Conſideration of thoſe grounds which he ſuppoſeth Non-conformiſts plead as ſufficient cauſes of their ſeparation, as they are Enumerated and Affirmed by him to be inſufficient.

Firſt, he ſaith, *Unſcripturall impoſitions can be no ſufficient cauſe to warrant a Separation from a Church.*

Anſwer, By unſcriptural impoſitions (he ſuppoſeth as he tells us) is meant, *no more than what is neither commanded nor forbid in Scriptures, neither by Particular or General Rules.* Thus when he hath by a falſe ſuppoſition faſhioned and erected a man of Straw, he then puſhes him quite down with the horns of a Dilemma, and Fancyes to himſelf a great victory, for from that ſuppoſition he thus argues, *Thoſe unſcriptural impoſitions which are neither commanded nor forbid, by any general or particular rules in Scripture, are either in themſelves Lawfull or unlawfull; if unlawfull, then they are againſt ſome Particular or Generall ſcripturall rule, & ſo cannot fall under the notion of unſcriptural Impoſitions, which are ſuppoſed to be againſt neither of theſe Rules, if lawfull, then it cannot be imagined how their being commanded, can make them unlawfull, ſo that in this caſe there is no ſin in yeilding obedience, and*

conſequently no juſt cauſe of withdrawing our Communion. This is the ſtrength of what he hath ſaid to this firſt caſe.

My Anſwer is this, I wonder which of his diſſenters gave him ground to ſuppoſe that ever any of them took unſcriptural Impoſitions, for ſuch things that were neither Commanded nor Forbid, by any General or Special Rule in Scripture; if thus you care not upon what Sandy premiſes you build your Concluſion, who can help it?

But I pray be pleaſed to let me tell you what we our ſelves mean, by unſcriptural Impoſitions.

They are ſuch things, the religious uſe whereof is impoſed upon Chriſtians, in the Worſhip and Service of God, under the penalties of depriving Miniſters of their office, or the exerciſe thereof, and of depriving both them and private Chriſtians of the liberty of enjoying Goſpell Ordinances or the Priviledges of a Viſible Church ſtate, by the cenſure of excommunication, which are things that are not either Commanded, or directly Forbidden in Scripture, in any expreſſe terms; for we confeſſe that there is not the word Surplice, or ſign of the Croſs, &c. ſo much as named in Scripture, and upon this account, we allow them the name of unſcriptural. But we ſay moreover, that the religious uſe of theſe things in the Worſhip of God, and much more the impoſitions of them as neceſſary Conditions of Communion, are againſt General Rules, and Inſtances in the like kind diſ-allowed in Scripture, from whence we by deduction gather the unlawfulneſſe, and ſinfulneſſe thereof, and upon this latter conſideration, I call them antiſcriptural, as being religious Cuſtomes and Uſages contrary to theſe General rules, &c.

Thus having given you our true ſence and meaning, of unſcriptural Ceremonies, now I anſwer to your dilemma.

Either you ſay, *theſe things thus impoſed are in themſelves lawful or unlawfull.*

I anſwer, Your argument as you form it, is trivial and not to the purpoſe; for it ſpeaks not to the Queſtion under Conſideration, for the Queſtion is not about the nature of the things impoſed, taken Abſolutely; but about the Religious uſe of thoſe things in the worſhip and ſervice of God. Thus then your argument ought to proceed: Either the religious uſe of theſe things im-

impoſed in the Worſhip and Service of God, is lawfull or unlawfull.

I anſwer Now directly, the Religious uſe of them is unlawfull, and this antecedently to the impoſing of them, and therefore the impoſing of them cannot make them lawfull.

Here had been a fit place for you to have ſhewn your ſtrength, (if you had any) in Convincing us, that the Religious uſe of theſe things in Gods Worſhip, is Lawfull antecedently to the Impoſition. But we have not a word hereof, and therefore ſince I find no more oppoſition therein, I might juſtly diſmiſs this firſt thing without any further Reply.

Yet if any ſhall ask for what reaſon is it, that we ſay that ſuch a uſe of them is unlawfull? I anſwer, our reaſons are ready, and they are ſuch that do at leaſt Convince our Conſciences ſo far as to doubt and really ſuſpect their uſe to be unlawful; Which is ſufficient to make their impoſition a warrantable ground of withdrawing (though the Evidence thereof be not ſo great, as to Convince our Gainſayers; no nor poſſibly to demonſtrate fully the unlawfulneſs thereof to our own Conſciences) as hath been already proved. If I be yet urged to ſhew our reaſons of this our perſwaſion or ſuppoſition; Methinks it were reaſon enough if I onely told ſuch, that theſe things impoſed, are only the productions of a humane ſpirit, and are beholding for their Continuance in being, to the Traditions of men; and ſo hold in no reſpect of Chriſt the head, which is ſufficient, not only in my opinion, but in the judgment of the Apoſtle *Paul*, to give members of Churches Caution againſt the reception of them, *Col.* 2. 8. *Beware leſt any man make a prey of you through Philoſophy, and vain deceit, after the Traditions of men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt.* Whoever pleaſeth to ſee an excellent paraphraſe upon this verſe, let him read it in Mr. *John Dale* in his expoſition on this Epiſtle, which hath the Imprimatur *Tho. Tomkins Ex Æd. Lambeth*, and therefore I hope the teſtimony of this excellent perſon may obtain ſome repute; his words are theſe, "The Scriptures calls thoſe doctrines, Tra-'ditions of men, which have men only for their Authors; which 'come from men, and not from God, theſe with the errours of 'Philoſophy, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks immediately before,

'may bear the same name, since they both flow'd from the spirit 'of men, and had no other source but this imagination. A little 'after he saith, Whence it doth appear, that no productions of 'an humane spirit, are receivable in Evangelicall Religion, nei-'ther those that are supposed by some pretended reasons, nor 'those that are founded upon Use and Antiquity; they are all of 'them nothing but folly and vanity in the sight of God, with 'what Colour soever they be painted over; And though men 'boast of their utility, they are extreamly hurtfull, as pestering 'Consciences, and busying them about things which God hath 'not ordained, and turning them aside from his pure service to 'matters of nought.

"Accordingly you see that our Lord Jesus Christ rejects, and 'roughly thrusts away all the Traditions of the Pharisees, how 'much esteemed soever they were for their Antiquity and pre-'tended Use: reproaching them that by holding fast those Tra-'ditions of Men, they did let loose the Commandements of God. 'Applying to them those words of the Lord in *Isaiah, In vain 'do they Honour me, teaching for doctrines the Traditions of men.* 'As indeed it's an unsufferable presumption, that men should at-'tempt to prescribe the form of Gods service, especially after 'the declaration which himself hath vouchsafed to make of his 'holy will, nor is there one among men that would indure his 'servant should treat him in that manner, and instead of obeying 'his Orders, and causing others to dispatch them; fall a Philo-'sophising in his house, and giving his Family a new Rule to 'observe, as if he were wiser than his Master. I know well the 'Authors of these Traditions, and those that follow them, are 'not without fine reasons, to palliate their temerity; but it is 'Evident that they do the very same for Substance, Neither is 'it to be doubted, but a Servant that should be culpable of such 'a vanity, would alledge likewise his motive and designes, to a-'ny that would give them audience. But Common sense dictat-'eth to the meanest capacities, that such undertaking Spirits, 'merit not so much as to be heard, especially where God is con-'cerned, in Comparison of whom, they with all their sufficiency 'are but poor worms of the Earth. Hold we firm therefore this 'Foundation of the Apostle, that the Traditions of men ought

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'to have no place in Religion, it concerns me not to inform my 'ſelf of their age whether they be the Traditions of Men An- 'tient or Modern, it ſufficeth that I know they are Traditions 'of men, having the Apoſtles advertiſement we ſhould not be 'moved with any reaſon, or ſplendor, or antiquity they may 'come cloathed with; if you would have me receive them, ſhew 'me that they are preſcriptions of Gods, inſtitutions of his 'Chriſt, Doctrines of his Scriptures; without this, however 'ſpecious you make them appear to me, I ſhall never believe it; 'it is but to make a prey of me, and your diligence ſhall have 'no effect but the making me ſuſpect them ſo much the more.

Thus far you have had the Judgement of as great Divines as the Church in this laſt age hath produced, and who ever thinks there is not reaſon enough in this diſcourſe to give Foundation ſufficient to tender Conſciences, at leaſt to ſuſpect, if not to be confident of the unlawfulneſs, of the Religious uſe of theſe things in the ſervice of God: I know not what ſuch will yeild to be ſufficient, nor would I wiſh ſuch any greater puniſhment for their being otherwiſe minded, than that they were obliged to give a more rational account of this verſe of the Apoſtle; and likewiſe to enervate the force of this Authors reaſon here produced.

I confeſſe ſuch is the vanity of mans mind, that whilſt he either not at all, or very negligently hath regard to that Jealouſie that God hath over his Worſhip; (as is frequently taken notice of in Scriptures) is apt to think of theſe fictitious Ceremonies of Worſhip as very indifferent and harmleſs matters; for who could of a ſudden think there is any good ground of making ſuch a buſineſſe about a Surplice, and the ſign of a Croſſe in Baptiſm, *&c.* as is made among us? nor is it matter of much wonder to me, to ſee ſome well meaning Men, yea, and in other things Wiſe and Learned, when they hear of the plauſible pretexts for their inſtitution, to be perſwaded into a conceit of their uſefulneſs: and why not? when I find *Nathan* in a like caſe highly deceived, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. When *David* acquainted him with his purpoſe to build a houſe for God, ſaith *Nathan* go, and do all that is in thy Heart, for the Lord is with thee: here was a well meant propoſal, and a very ſudden and raſh anſwer,

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as appears by that ſudden check that the Lord that very night put to it, *v.* 4. and it came to paſſe that night that the Word of the Lord came to *Nathan* the Prophet, ſaying, go and tell my Servant *David*, ſaying, *Shalt thou build me an Houſe for me to dwell in?* again, *v.* 7. *Speak I a word with any of the Tribes of Iſrael, whom I commanded to feed my People Iſrael, ſaying why build ye not me an houſe of Cedar?* it is evident from hence that though both *David* and *Nathans* meaning were good, yet the work deſigned by the one, and approved by the other; had it been ſet upon and finiſhed, had been evil, becauſe there was no word of the Lord to warrant it, which is implyed in the anſwer, God makes. That we are not ſingular in giving this Interpretation, ſee *Pools Synopſis Critic.* on the place, thus, *vade, fac. hoc dicit ſenſu humano erravit Nathan, quia Deum non conſuluit, mirum eſt eum ita temerè pronunciare, quia Dominus tecum eſt*] *eſt Paralogiſmus a ſecundum quid ad Simpliciter. Ver.* 4. *In illâ nocte,*] *Deus non patitur ſuos diù decipi cùm videat eos Simpliciter errare. v.* 5. *Numquid tu ædificabis?*] *qu. cur David retrahitur & Judæi in* Hag. 1. *Arguuntur quod non ædificent? Reſpond. quod David non haberet verbum Domini, Judæi autem haberent. cui præcepit ut paſceret populum,*] *voluntas Davidis bona fuit, & placuit Deo, ſed in eo erravit quod non haberet verbum Dei, a quo expectare debuit, & Locum, & tempus, & peculiare mandatum.* The ſumme of the whole is this *Davids* will was good, but to have done the thing willed, had been evil; becauſe there was no command from God for doing it: the caſe here is much alike peradventure the will of thoſe that firſt invented the religious uſe of theſe things might be good, and yet the uſe of them might be bad; for the very ſame reaſon becauſe they want the word of the Lord for their warrant.

Thus have I given you ſome further account, why at leaſt we ſuſpect the Religious uſe of theſe things in Gods Service to be unlawful, antecedent to any impoſition. If you will ſtill call for more of our reaſons, I tell you they are ready, and you ſhould have them, but that I fear the ſwelling of the book beyond the ordinary readers patience and purſe: but I wonder what you can ſay that amounts to as good reaſon for their lawfulneſs, as hath been already given againſt their lawfulneſs. As for that text ſo commonly

monly urged, *let all things be done in decency and order*, it will do you little Service in ſuch like caſes as we have inſtanced in, for the Apoſtle doth there ſpeak of ſuch a decency and order, that doth ariſe from the Nature of things, and not of ſuch that have their reſult onely from the arbitrarious Fancies of Men, of the former kind of order and decency the God of Nature is the Author, of the other mans imagination; for the undecency and diſorder there reproved, is ſuch as ſpeaking in a ſtrange Tongue to the Church met together for edification, which ſometimes none underſtood but him that ſpake, or elſe paradventure the ſpeaking of more than one at one time, which could not but breed confuſion or be unprofitable, or ſuch as conſiſted in ſome Womens forwardneſſe to teach and inſtruct the Church, which conſiſted much of men, which was contrary to that order where in God had placed that Sex in Subjection to men, and therefore were very unmeet to be imployed as their inſtructors. But what is there in theſe Ceremonies, or in the Nature of them, abſtracted from mans imagination, that hath any thing of this natural order and decency, for whether you think it or not: yet certainly, it's a very diſorderly thing for a Miniſter to ſpeak a Sermon of Greek or Latine, to a Church that onely underſtand Engliſh; or for many to be ſpeaking together, but lay aſide Imagination and I wonder what indecency is in praying without a Surplice or Adminiſtring Baptiſm without the ſign of the Croſſe?

So that it's evident theſe Ceremonies fell not under that kind of order and decency of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and therefore there is no warrant from that text for their Inſtitution or their uſe.

In Truth their pretended decency, is much like that decency that *David* imagined, which was the reaſon of his contriving for God a houſe, thus he reaſoned; ſhall I dwell in a houſe of Cedar, and is it decent or comely that the Ark of God ſhould dwell within Curtaines? one would have thought his reaſon from decency was good, but as you have heard God anſwered his reaſon and reproved his humane Judgement therein, ſo that an argument from decency in ſuch matters is very falacious: yet again, I have ſeen ſome men arguing thus, if it be not lawful to uſe

things Religiously in the service of God without a warrant from the Word, why then do we Religiously make use of Churches to meet in, Pulpits to Preach in, Communion Table to eat the Lords Supper on? are not all these things Religiously used in the Worship of God, or have we an expresse word for them? Or why do we admit of the dividing of the Bible into Chapters, and the addition of the Contents, and dividing the Chapters into Verses? or why do we admit of the turning *Davids* Psalms into Meeter, and singing them in such Tunes that are made for them, have we any expresse word for these?

I answer, as to the use of Churches, Pulpits, Tables, I confesse they are used as convenient circumstances of the Worship of God, but then I say, their conveniency arises from the Nature of the Acts of worship, and a natural necessity of such kind of things for the performance of these Acts of worship conveniently, and are not the results of mere phantasy and imagination; for certainly it's more than a phantasy to say, it's convenient that when the worshippers meet together for worship, they should have a capacious house to meet in, to shelter them from the injuries of the weather, or it's more than bare fancy to say, its convenient that the Preacher should stand above the people, both to ease him of the inconveniency of the croud, and that he may be better heard, and so it may be said of the Table, how can the Lords Supper be conveniently administred without a Table to put the Bread and the VVine upon? but as for your Ceremonies, there is no necessity at all of them, but they are the only births of an Arbitrarious vain Imagination, for the ordinances may be well enough administred without them.

Besides I answer, that these things now named are used as circumstances convenient, and in some sort naturally necessary to the Acts of worship, yet I deny, that ever when they are so used, that they ought to be Religiously used; a thing is then Religiously used, not barely when I use it in worship, (for so I use my Cloak and Band in worship which yet I use not Religiously) but to use a thing in worship religiously, is when I use it for religious ends, as to the pleasing of God, and the edifying of my self and others in religious matters, now when we meet in a Church, or stand in a Pulpit, or eat the Lords Supper on the

Table

Table, we do not think that there is any thing in those places that render us or our worship any whit the more pleasing to God; for if we met on a Mountain, or on a Sea shore, and taught out of a boat, or in case of necessity by reason of persecution, did eat the Lords Supper upon the grasse, provided we did all in Spirit and Truth, our services were every whit as acceptable as in, from, or on the other places; and it's a meer Idle superstitious conceit to think otherwise: but now as for these Ceremonies, either you think to please God by them and edifye the Church, or you do not; if you do, then you fall under the like reproof of God to *David*, when did God bid you do such things? or when did he tell you that then he was pleased with them? if not, they are altogether impertinent and useless, for as I have shewed they arise not out of the Nature of things, but meerly out of phantasy and therefore ought to be let alone, for assuredly man doth not, much lesse doth God care to be trifled with, in matters of Worship; as to the other things instanced in, as dividing the Scriptures into Chapters, and giving the Contents thereof, to that I say though there is not a particular expresse command for it, yet there is a general command to those that are Ministers of Christ to explain the whole Councel of God to his people, and such addition now named, with the giving of the Contents of each part, any Minister of the Gospel hath a warrant to do by virtue of the said general command given to Ministers; and upon this account those that did divide them, did well and warrantably, for it is one of the commanded works of Ministers, to divide the Word aright.

As for the digesting the Chapters into verses, the direct and immediate design thereof was onely to help the Memory, nor do those that read Scriptures make any other use of them; I never understood that any used those figures with any conceit, as if they pleased God more with reading the Word with them, than they should do if they read it without them, or as if they thought they were any direct helps to their Faith or devotion; and as for Singing Psalms, there is a Word that gives Foundation to that Ordinance, as there is none for humane Ceremonies, and as for the Melody that there is made, that likewise hath its Foundation in the word; so then there is nothing done by di-

geſting *Davids* words into Meeter, but only a putting them into a poſture fit for to be ſung, which the Nature of that duty makes neceſſary, and therefore gives warrant thereto. But as for the Ceremonies contended for, They have no ſuch original, but as I have ſaid only depend upon mens imagination, for there is nothing in any Act of worſhip that needs or calls for them.

Having thus ſhewn you ſome of thoſe grounds we have to ſuſpect the lawfulneſſe of the things impoſed, and likewiſe laid naked the weakneſs of ſome of your reaſons from which you think them lawful, before I conclude my anſwer to this firſt part of your charge againſt us; a little to try the force of your conſequence: let us therefore for once ſuppoſe that the things impoſed were ſuch that might be lawfully uſed, for Religious ends, in the worſhip of God; what then? you *ſay it then follows that they do not become unlawful becauſe impoſed.*

I Anſwer, firſt by conceſſion it is true, were they lawful to be done, I cannot ſay that the command would alter the nature of theſe things to make them unlawful, but yet I ſay, this will not excuſe the impoſer, nor him that obeys the impoſition, from ſin; not the impoſer, for he uſurps a power over another Lords Servants, in things that do not concern him: and ſecondly, if the impoſer injoyns thoſe little and ſuppoſe lawful things under ſevere penalties, ſuch as deprivation, excommunication, baniſhment, *&c.* in the one he ſins as a uſurper of Chriſts Authority, in the other as cruel; nor is he that obeys the impoſition, Innocent; but I do not lay his guilt upon doing the thing ſuppoſed lawful, but inaſmuch as by his obedience thereto he doth ſeem to own ſuch an uſurpation, and to acknowledge the impoſer his Maſter in ſuch matters, wherein Chriſt only is his Lord; and upon this account I ſay, he ſins, inaſmuch as he tranſgreſſeth that Command of Chriſt, *Let no man be called Maſter or Father*, that is let none be owned as your Maſter or Father, in theſe matters of Faith and VVorſhip, *for* in ſuch matters *ye have but one Maſter even Chriſt, Math.* 23. 8. 10. Thus I have ſaid what I conceive is a ſufficient anſwer to your firſt charge when you ſay, that our ſeparation upon the account of unſcriptural Ceremonies impoſed, is not ſufficient to excuſe us from Schiſme.

Secondly he ſaith, *That the Church requiring from us any doubt-*

doubtful or ſuſpected practices, as Conditions of her Communion, is not a juſt cauſe of Separation.

I have proved the falſhood of this Propoſition already, from the teſtimonies of the Apoſtle *Paul*, who is a far better Caſuiſt than the Author, who hath declared that Chriſtians are under the Obligations of obeying the dictates of their Conſciences, or not acting contrary thereto though their Conſciences be under a miſtake. And beſides I have given you in the teſtimony of Mr. *Hales*, and the reaſons of Dr. *Stillingfleet* againſt this poſition of the Authour, which I think will be long enough before he ſolidly anſwer.

But becauſe the Authour of this Propoſition doth eſſay to give a reaſon of what he here aſſerts, I ſhall not be ſo uncivil as not to take notice thereof, but will return him a fair anſwer.

That is no juſt cauſe (ſaith he) *for we muſt at leaſt have as much certainty of the unlawfulneſſe of the Action enjoyned, as we have of our Obligation to the Authority that enjoynes them, before we withdraw our obedience to it; otherwiſe we do not proceed upon ſafe grounds: but now we are abſolutely certain that God hath commanded us to obey them that have the rule over us, but we are not certain that the Actions we here ſpeak of, are any where forbid by him, for if they were they would be no longer doubtful or ſuſpected, they would be certain ſins; ſo that if we will follow the ſurer ſide, as all Chriſtians in theſe caſes are bound to do, we muſt continue our obedience to the Church, notwithſtanding we ſuſpect or doubt of the lawfulneſs of her commands,* Thus far he-----

I anſwer, this Argument (notwithſtanding the prittineſs of its contrivance is certainly falatious; for *ex vero nihil ſequi poteſt niſi verum*, for the rule there laid down of always obeying the Church Rulers, where the Conſcience is in doubt, is in many inſtances a ready way to involve many a weak Conſcience in damnable guilt. For ſuppoſe there had been many a doubtful Conſcience among the *Iſraelites* in *Ahabs* time, as it ſeems there were, who halted betwixt the VVorſhip of *Jehovah* and *Baal*; ſuppoſe yet a little further, that the Conſciences thus doubting were rather inclined to believe *Jehovah* the true God, and *Baal* but an Idol, but yet were not abſolutely certain; what ſay you now?

now? what Councel would you have given ſuch an one, if he had askt your advice? do but look how ill-favouredly ſuch an anſwer as this would ſeem; true might you ſay, according to your rule, I do believe that *Jehovah* is the only true God, and *Baal* but a Devil, and that your worſhiping a Devil is a damnable ſin; but as for you, you are not ſo certain hereof as I am, yet your Conſcience is inclined to believe as I do; my advice therefore is this, that ſince your Rulers have commanded you to worſhip that Devil, I Counſel you ſo to do, till your Conſcience be better reſolved; and why? becauſe you are certain God hath commanded you to obey your rulers, but you are not yet ſo certain that *Baal* is a Devil; I dare ſay you abhor ſuch a reſolution of the caſe, and yet I ſee not but you muſt be forced to give no better, if you follow the rule laid down in this argument; I might inſtance in other like caſes, as if a Jew in the dayes of Meſſiahs being in the Fleſh, had been inclined to believe in him as the Meſſiah, but yet was not ſo abſolutely certain thereof, as he was of this command, thou ſhalt obey the Rulers of thy people; according to you, he muſt go againſt the inclination of his doubting, Conſcience in diſowning and rejecting Chriſt that he might yeild obedience to his Rulers, who command, him ſo to do; in like manner, if a poor man were inclined to believe the Maſſe Idolatry, he muſt go on in that ſin againſt his doubting Conſcience till he comes to be as certain it is Idolatry, as he is that God hath commanded us to obey our Rulers.

From what hath been ſaid, it is evident there is a fallacy in your Argument; and now to ſhew you where it lies, give me leave to tell you, it lies in your arguing from particulars to an Univerſal, *vel a dicto ſecundum quid ad dictum ſimpliciter*. That becauſe I am ſure that God hath Commanded me to obey my rulers in ſome things, therfore I am ſure that God hath Commanded me to obey my Rulers in every thing, yea, in ſuch things which I ſuſpect to be ſin: Do but you make this Evident, that in that very Command which I ſuſpect to be ſinfull, that I may be ſure that God hath Commanded me to obey, and then I will give up the Cauſe. But this you can never do, for upon thoſe very arguments, upon which I ſuſpect the ſinfulneſſe of the Command, upon the ſame Arguments I ſuſpect whether God hath given them

them Authority to Command, or whether God would have me to obey; for I can never be ſure, that God hath Commanded me to obey my Rulers in ſuch inſtances where I ſuſpect my Rulers Command me to ſin. So that, whereas your Argument ſuppoſeth that a Doubting Conſcience may be more certain that God hath Commanded him to obey his Rulers, than he is of the thing he doubts; and ſo he is therefore to take the ſurer ſide, and ſo to obey his Rulers againſt his Conſcience. I have made the contrary appear, by ſhewing that a man can never be ſure that God hath Commanded him to obey his Rulers in ſuch caſes where he ſuſpects they Command him to ſin. So that in obeying them he doth not take the ſurer ſide. Thus is the ſtrength of this Argument, and ſo the ſtrength of his ſecond (Charged upon the Nonconformiſts) broken, wherein he hath been endeavouring to prove, they have no juſt Cauſe of Separation, though it be upon the account of avoiding what they ſuſpect to be ſinfull which is made the Condition of Communion.

Thirdly, ſaith he, *Neither can it be true that Errours in a Church, as to matter of Doctrines; or Corruptions, as to matter of Practice, (ſo long as theſe Errours and Corruptions are only ſuffered, but not Impoſed) can be a ſufficient Cauſe of Separation: The reaſon is, becauſe theſe things are not ſin in us, ſo long as we do not joyn with the Church in them.*

I Anſwer, Firſt, I would fain know what kind of Errours of Doctrines, or Corruptions of Practice, you do here mean? for they are of divers ſorts and kinds, and accordingly what you here ſay may be either True or Falſe.

If by Errours of Doctrine you mean, ſuch that are conſiſtent with the holding of Chriſt the head, or ſuch that touch not upon the Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Doctrine; ſome ſuch were thoſe in the Apoſtles days, that related to the Abſtaining from meats, and obſervation of days; in ſuch caſes doubtleſſe Chriſtians ought without impoſing to bear with one another, and to continue Communion with each other, notwithſtanding ſuch differences, which was the Apoſtles counſel in that caſe; in this ſence, what you ſay is true. Or if by Corruptions in Practice, you ſhould mean ſuch infirmities, that all Members of Churches are ſubject to more or leſſe, (for who can ſay, that he is without ſin?)

ſin?) in this ſence you are right; or if you mean by errours and Corruptions, ſuch that are of a more Groſſe, and Hainous nature, which are not publickly known, or of which the Members cannot have ſufficient proof, for the conviction of themſelves, that thoſe that are accuſed are really guilty, ſo alſo I grant what is here ſaid; for till it be evident by ſome overt Act, that *Judas* hath a Devill, and is a Traytor; he ought to be look'd on as an Apoſtle, and might be heard.

In like manner, if the Governours of the Church, were with many of the Members, *Arrians* or *Socinians* in their judgments; but not known evidently to be ſuch, it may be the Duty of ſound Chriſtians not to withdraw Communion from them.

But if it ſhall ſo fall out, that the Governours of a Church, and a great body of the People be ſo erroneous, and this ſufficiently known, and though reproved, yet they abide obſtinate maintainers thereof; I ſay in this Caſe it is ſufficient ground for ſound Members to withdraw, and ſave themſelves from ſo dangerous a Society: and why? becauſe I may not lawfully joyn with ſuch a Church, where poſſibly I may, every time I joyn the Lord Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, Blaſpheme; whoſe Deity is denied by theſe Sects: nor may I joyn, leſt I indanger my Faith; for evill words do not only Corrupt good manners, but have a direct tendency to corrupt a ſound Faith; and certainly the ſafety of a Soul is of greater worth, than the preſervation of a Corrupt Peace, or Unity of a Corrupt Church.

And what I have ſaid upon a ſuppoſition of ſuch groſſe errours in the Rulers, and many of the people of a Church; the ſame may be ſaid of either Idolaters, or groſly profane practices; for if Miniſters, or many of the Members, ſhould degenerate to a Popiſh Idolatry; or ſhould prove Common Drunkards, or Whore-mongers, or Oppoſers, &c. and being admoniſhed thereof, ſhould deride the admonition as Preciſe, and Fanatical: or if the Members only were Commonly ſo, and the Rulers wittingly Connive thereat, and ſeek not their Cure, by Reproofs and Cenſures, as Chriſt hath commanded in ſuch caſes; I ſay again, it is a ſufficient ground for the ſound Members to withdraw (eſpecially if a more pure Church may be had) yea though neither theſe errours or practices are impoſed; and that firſt, leſt under the

the pretence of Peace, they ſhould be guilty of the greateſt uncharitableneſſe, and that is, the hardning and incouraging, them in their abominable Impieties. Again, becauſe the ſound ought, by the law of God and Nature, to provide for their own ſafety. Certainly if there be a Contagion in evill words to corrupt good manners, there is much more in wicked Practices; and therefore they cannot but be in apparent danger by Communicating with ſuch, and certainly in ſo doing, there is nothing done contrary to the Fundamental reaſon of Chriſts Inſtituting diſcipline in his Church, which as I conceive was for the Cure of the unſound, and for the preſervation of the ſound, from the infection of the unſound: Now if no care be taken for the cure of the ſame, but that infectious Crew is kept in the Church to the palpable endangering of the ſound, it is apparent that the Foundations of diſcipline are rooted up, and in effect there is no diſcipline at all, and that therefore every good Chriſtian may ſeek his ſafety as he can, ſince he cannot obtain it in a Church by the means of the Goſpel Diſcipline, which through the Corruption of the Rulers, and the ſwaying part of the Corrupt Members is made void.

But no more of this till by and by, when I ſhall have a freſh occaſion to ſpeak further to this point.

At preſent let us again return to inquire into a full ſence of his Propoſition if by any means we can find it out.

You ſay in generall terms, without any Limitation, that errors in Doctrine, and Corruptions in practice, when found in a Church, but not impoſed, is no juſt ground of ſeparation.

I Anſwer, Methinks by this generall way of Expreſſing your ſelf, that you are not afraid of your Readers underſtanding this Propoſition without any Limitation.

I pray tell me, what if *Socinian* or *Popiſh* Errours and Corrupt practices, were got into the Rulers of a Church, and a great body of the People, and that they ſhould only tollerate them, but not impoſe them on any, what hinders (if what you here ſay be true) but that every ſound Chriſtian may, yea and ought to Communicate with ſuch a Church? eſpecially if Providence had caſt him into ſuch a place; where no other could be had: ſo that one of a Proteſtant Faith, might lawfully joyn with a Popiſh

Church, not only in hearing their Friars Preach, but likewise in receiving the Mass of them; provided they would not engage him to profess their Errors, or to Practise the Superstition, or Idolatry in the Mass: but permit him to receive it in both kinds in his own sence, though he knows the Priest delivers it, and the rest of the Communicants receive it in the Popish sence.

I would not be so unmerciful to charge you as holding this, but this I say, that so much seems to follow Clearly from this your Position, if taken without any Limitation; and I can discern none in this Paragraph.

If you say, that there is enough said by you, *pag.* 22. concerning the Popish Church, to clear you in this particular: I Answer, It is true, you say there, that the great and general Corruption of the Church of *Rome*, both in Doctrine and Practice, doth endanger the Salvation of such as Communicate with her; and that therefore a totall separation from her, and an erection of new Churches may be Lawfull.

I say notwithstanding all this, yet I doubt whether you there mean, that her Errors and Corruptions in themselves, or of their own nature do so far endanger mens Salvation, that though they were not imposed, yet we were bound to a totall separation: or do you mean, they therefore so endanger our Salvation because imposed, as to warrant such a separation.

If your Proposition there, may be understood in the former sence; then what you say here (taken universally) must needs be false; for if the very being of some sorts of Errors and Corruptions in a Church, (though not imposed) are so dangerous as to warrant a separation; how can it then be universally true (as you seem here to assert) that Errours in Doctrine, and Corruptions in Practice, (so long as they are only suffered, but not imposed) cannot be a sufficient Cause of separation? but if you are there to be understood in the latter sence, that is to say, that the Errours and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, only as imposed are so dangerous to mens salvation, as to warrant a separation; then that which I even now suggested is true; that Christians may Lawfully here be Baptized, go to Mass with the Church of *Rome*; Provided they were not forced to make a Profession of believing their Errors, or had leave to receive those Sacraments

craments with all the Superſtitions thereto belonging, in their own ſence; though it was well known, that they adminiſtred them in an other. I will not at preſent (as aforeſaid) charge this opinion upon the Author: though it ſeems to be a conſequence rightly inferred from this, and other principles of his in this diſcourſe, becauſe he ſaith *pag.* 31. *A man may believe a propoſition, and not believe all that follows from it*; So that at no hand are we to charge ſuch Conſequences upon him, unleſs he doth explicitly own them, but whether you will explicitly own them or no, I am not certain: Yet this I know, that I have heard a Miniſter of the Church of *England*, not ſcruple to profeſſe that he would, for Peace ſake, uſe all the Popiſh Ceremonies of Cream and Spittle in Baptiſme, as well as the ſign of the Croſs, provided his Rulers did impoſe them, but ſo as that he was left to his liberty, as not to uſe them to the Popiſh Superſtitious ends: But why ſuch an one may not upon the ſame pretence of peace, practice moſt, if not all of the Ceremonies and Geſtures pertaining to the Maſs; granting him the liberty of a mentall abſtraction of them, from their Superſtitious and Idolatrous ones, I cannot yet underſtand; and what wonder is it, if there be of ſuch perſwaſions among you, when it is evident, that there are not a few of your Church, whoſe Ambition it ſeems to be, to run as nigh to the Romiſh Rights, as they may be ſuffered; not only in adoring, by bowing of the knee in the act of receiving of the Supper; but in erecting the Communion Table in the form of an Altar; and not only in bowing towards it, but being ready to kiſs the very ſteps that lead up to it. But if this were your mind, I can prove the contrary.

But I know he will ſay, all this is nothing to our preſent caſe, for there are no ſuch errours or idolatrous Practices in the Church of *England*, and therefore cannot be pleaded as a cauſe of our ſeparation.

I Anſwer, It is very difficult to know what the Church of *England* is; and how then ſhall we be able to underſtand what are the Truths or Errours ſhe maintaineth, or what are her Practices?

If you ſhould take it to conſiſt of all the Chriſtians in *England*, whether Miniſters or People, ſo the Church of *England* would

Comprehend all Non-conformists Churches as well as others.

If you take it for such Christians only who are of the Faith in Doctrinals with those that hold with the 39. Articles; here the Non-conformists come in for a share also, who are of your Faith therein: excepting those which respect Discipline & Ceremonies. But if you will take in, and own such Christians in *England* to be only of your Church, that agree with you in Ceremonies, and a certain form of Service and Discipline which Christ never Commanded, and without which many of Christs Churches have and do subsist and flourish, to say no more, I wonder then, by what Gospell Rule you presume to constitute a Church only of such, as exclusive of all others, however found in Faith and unblameable in life.

Or shall we take your Church only to consist of its officers; how shall we then Judge of your Faith, and Doctrinals? when so many of your Ministers are so contrary one to another. Some are for the doctrine of Predestination, and others against it: some are for Justification by Imputed righteousness, others not: some for a difference betwixt Grace and Morality, others oppose it: Some for the divine right of Episcopacy, others that the Magistrate may appoint what form of government he pleases: in a word, some write or approve of such a book, that others of you think (as I have heard) fit to be burnt. Which of these shall we understand to be your Church?

If those only, that meet by authority, in your Consistory, to advise of what is fit for the rest to believe and Practise; What then becomes of the Church, when that Consistory is dissolved and sent home.

But what if a Consistory concludes of the 39. Articles, and the Preachers when all is done preach the quite contrary in several weighty points (As it is conceived many of yours do) and these are not only tollerated but encouraged by preferments, & consequently owned by your selves? but you have a salve for all this, for you tell us, let some (and why not many or most?) preach Doctrines contrary thereto, yet your Church is very found in Doctrine so long as the XXXIX. Articles remain to be her Doctrine. But I wonder how these Articles may be called your

Doctrines

Doctrines, if but for fear, your Miniſters or People ſhall believe them, according to the true intent and meaning of the Compilers.

But in the mean time, what a ſad Condition muſt the poor People be in, when ſuch corrupt Teachers ſhall be impoſed on them, if they are bound (for fear of Schiſme) to ſit under their corrupt Doctrines to the endangering of their Faith, and conſequently of their Salvation, yea though they be errours contrary to the Doctrine of your own Church.

If you ſay, the people have liberty (in this caſe) of complaining.

I Anſwer, but to what purpoſe? when ſuch errours are publickly profeſt in Printed Books, and no courſe taken for the correcting or ejecting of the Authors, which ſhall hold their places with encouragements?

If you ſay they may then withdraw, and joyn with other Paſtors, provided they be of the ſame Church of *England*.

I Anſwer then, what is become of your propoſitions, that errors only tollerated, are no juſt ground for ſeparation?

If you ſay, they may be juſt ground of ſeparation from a particular Congregation, but not from a National Church.

I Anſwer, but what if the whole National Church ſhould be guilty of the ſame or like errours: what, is it a juſt ground Then to withdraw? if you ſay no, I demand for what reaſon? I can not think of any, except theſe two: that to ſeparate from a Particular, ſo we joyn with another of the ſame National Church, doth not run us upon the ſame danger, as if we ſeparated from the whole; for the latter leaves us deſtitute of all publick advantages to our ſelves, which the other doth not. Beſide, the publick honouring of God in his Worſhip, which is every Chriſtians Duty, would be neglected.

My further reply is this, that if the honouring of God in publick, and my Souls ſafety, are the only reaſons that are to ſway in this matter, then in the pertaking with Churches, though Non-conformiſts, where both theſe may be obtained, the ſeparation will be lawful, and conſequently it will be lawful to ſeparate from a Church upon the only cauſe of its having corrupt Doctrines in it tollerated, though not impoſed. If you ſay there is a law of the

Land

Land that makes it unlawful to joyn with a Church ſeparate from the National:

I anſwer, then the queſtion will be only this; whether the Law of a Land, or the ſecurity of my Faith (and conſequently my Salvation) ought more to be regarded? which I think is very eaſy to determine.

From what hath been ſaid, it is evident, that ſome ſort of errors in a Church, though but tollerated, may be a juſt ground of withdrawing; though I do not charge the Church of *England* with any ſuch errors, nor had I ground, provided her Miniſters did honeſtly believe thoſe Articles that they have profeſſed to believe; which (as is conceived) ſeveral of them do not. So that what as to this point I have ſaid, is pleadable only by ſuch private Chriſtians whoſe lot it is to fall under the Teaching of ſuch Conformiſts, who are ſuch Non-conformiſts to the Doctrines of the Church of *England*, as that they dare deride ſome ſober Chriſtians under the notion of being acquainted with the Perſon of Chriſt, or that dare Teach there is no difference betwixt Grace and Morality; or that there is no ſpecial Grace exerted in the converſion of a ſinner, or that the Holy Ghoſt is of no further uſe in the Converſion of men, than as he firſt inſpired thoſe that delivered the Doctrine of Chriſtianity in Scriptures, and inabled ſuch to confirm the Truth of it with Miracles, ſo that men are left in the working out of their Salvation, to their Bibles and the uſe of their natural Faculties, excluſive of any other operation of the Spirit; either to their illumination or ſanctification. I ſay, if the People withdraw from ſuch Teachers or Congregations, where ſuch Doctrines are owned, for ſecuring their Faith or Salvation, there ſo doing is juſtifiable; becauſe the law of ſelf preſervation, is to be regarded before any poſitive law of viſible Church Union; and I hope there is no true Son of the Church, that hath any zeal for the purity of their Church Doctrine, will be my adverſary herein: and thus much ſhall ſuffice to be ſaid concerning your Doctrines, and of the lawfulneſs of ſeparating from ſome of the particular Congregations, in caſe the Teachers do groſſely pervert Some of the weighty Doctrines of your own Church.

We ſhall in the next place conſider what you have here offered as to corrupt practices, which you ſay is no juſt ground (if only

only tollerated, but not impoſed) of withdrawing, eſpecially if they be no worſe than are found in the Church of *England*.

I Anſwer, firſt, if all the corrupt practices in your Church were only tollerated but not impoſed, you would have much more reaſon of your ſide againſt us, than you have, becauſe ſeveral things which you enjoyn to be practiſed, we in our Conſciences believe to be unlawful; and we cannot, muſt not, have Communion with you except we comply therein, ſo that ſhould it be yielded, that unimpoſed corruption in a Church, is no juſt ground of ſeparation, yet is it of no force againſt us, becauſe ſome of theſe we conceive to be corruptions, are impoſed.

But to come cloſe to the caſe as it ſtands related to this Propoſition, ſuppoſe no impoſition of any of thoſe things that are in controverſie between us; which is the ſuppoſition in the Propoſition: what will follow, but firſt that all the Miniſters of Chriſt in *England*, would be capable of places? for they are Impoſitions that are the principal reaſons why they are kept out. Secondly, it would follow, that thoſe that are for the uſe of the Liturgy and Ceremonies, and a promiſcuous Communion with all that had but the name of Chriſtians, in the Sacraments, might therein act according as they ſaw fit, and as for other Miniſters they might freely exerciſe their Miniſtry without Liturgy or Ceremonies, and might exerciſe Diſcipline toward their re-reſpective Members according to Chriſt's direction in the caſe.

The queſtion now ariſing can be only this; whether it would be lawful for a Member of that Congregation where the Liturgy and Ceremonies are in uſe, and Diſcipline neglected that conceived theſe things to be corruptions, to ſeparate and joyn with another; free from theſe conceived corruptions. I ſay he might firſt, becauſe were ther is no impoſition, ther can be no law of Superiors binding him to a Communion with ſuch a conceived corrupt Church: ſo that your great reaſon (ordinarily produced in this caſe) would be of no force here. Secondly, becauſe that it is much ſafer for his ſoul to be joyned to a pure Church than a corrupt, and ſelf preſervation is founded on a law Superior to that of viſible Church-Union, to this or that particular Church. *David* might eat of the Shew-Bread to ſave his life, which

which had not been lawful; if positive laws were not to give place to natural.

Thus have I examined the third position, both generally, and as it particularly respecteth our present differences; and shewn both its unsoundness in the former, and impertinency as to the latter; I have onely one word to say to the Reason given, upon which the supposed Truth thereof is founded, and so shall dismisse it.

The reason why he says that Errors in a Church, as to matter of Doctrine; and corruptions, as to matter of practice; if but suffered and not imposed, is no just ground for separation: because these things are not sins in us, so long as we do not joyn with the Church therein.

I Answer, if he mean that other mens Errors or Corruptions are not properly or formally mine by being in their Company, and joyned with them in things lawful, I grant it. But yet it follows not, that therefore I may joyn with them if I can otherways help it; a man may buy and sell, and eat and drink with Fornicators, or other unclean and Debauched Creatures, if he cannot trade and get provision for his body but in their Company. But certainly, if a Trade might be as well managed with sober men, and that Meat may be had in better Company, it would be sinful then to Trade and Eat with such; and why? because the law of self preservation warranteth me in the former, but not in the latter: I may not neglect the preservation of my life by eating, nor geting a livelyhood by trading, which is ordinarily necessary to the preservation of my life, & present being, A meer occasion of hardning others in sin, or scandalizing weak Brethren; but when no such necessity doth lye on me, then the preventing of a scandal, or giving occasion to the hardning others in the their sin, and the safety of my self from their contagion, are reasons of force to bind me from such Societies.

In like manner, if the Word of God could be no where heard, or Communion in Sacraments no where enjoyed, but only in such Churches that were so corrupt as yours is conceived to be; it might be Lawfull, yea and a Duty to joyn with you, so far as possibly Christians could without sin. But if other Churches may be had, which are regular according to Gods law, and only

ly irregular according to mans, then it is a Duty to withdraw, to prevent ſcandals, and hardning a Church in its Corruptions, together with the preſervation of themſelves from the danger of being infected with thoſe Corruption, which are reaſons of another nature, than that only one which you give; for though (as I ſaid,) by joying with ſuch, I make not their ſins formally mine, yet I ſin therein, upon other accounts now named which may juſtifie my withdrawing.

I come now to his fourth which is this.

That the enjoying of a more profitable Miniſtry, or living under a more pure Diſcipline in an other Church, is no juſt Cauſe of forſaking the Communion of that whereof we are members. Becauſe we are not to commit the leaſt Crime, for the attaining of the greateſt good in the World, now it is a Crime to forſake Communion with a Church of which we are members, where we may continue without ſin.

I Anſwer, Whatever may be thought of this poſition, I am perſwaded that the reaſon annext, is too weak to bear the weight of it: for the reaſon ſuppoſeth that which is not to be ſuppoſed: that is to ſay, that to withdraw from a Church, for the benefit of a more profitable Miniſtry, is a Crime. You call it a crime, becauſe you ſuppoſe it is a tranſgreſſion of the Law of viſible Communion, with ſome particular Church; but I ſay that the Laws of Viſible Communion, with this or that Particular Church are but poſitive, and therefore ſubordinate to laws more naturall and neceſſary, ſuch is that wherein we are commanded to take care of our ſouls and ſalvation. So that if Chriſtians do ſhift particular Churches for the obtaining of very apparent advantages to their Salvation, above what they could have had where they were, I ſee therein no crime at all committed, except ſuch an one wherewith the Phariſees charged our Saviour, as the Breaking of the Sabbath, that he might heal the ſick. Certainly the cure and Salvation of ſick Souls, as of ſick Bodies, is of greater account with God than keeping to Pariſh Churches, or the obſervation of a day.

Sure I am, that very many Souls, that have for many years lain Blind and Dead in treſpaſſes, under their Pariſh Miniſters. (I ſpeak not partially as to thoſe only that are now in place, but

formerly when the Non-conformists held their places) but upon changing of their Minister, received their conviction, and reall Conversion, I dare say it would be a very hard Task to convince such of the sin of separation in so doing.

I have much wondered that men should think it but reasonable that every man should be permitted to chuse his own Physitian, and who will blame one that is sickly if he (waveing the advice of his Neighbour, though a Physitian) shall apply himself to the most skillfull and successfull that he can hear of for his health; & yet that it should be accounted so criminal to use the same care for a mans salvation. And what though the Physitian I speak of, be not of the Colledg, nor can be suffered to be there of, because perhaps he will not swear to the truth of all the Aphorisms of *Hypocrates*, or the truth of all and every part of the Colledges dispensations: who think you, will stand upon such a Nicety, if he yet believes him exceeding skillfull and successefull in the cure of such distempers under which he groaneth? and certainly when you have writ your self a weary to prove the contrary, yet men herein will follow the Conduct of their Reason, and the instinct of Self-Preservation: which is not only seen verified among the Non-conformists, but among your selves. What else is the reason, that some of your own Churches are thronged with auditors, when in others, the People sit thinly scattered, like the gleanings after Harveft? and I think it almost as easie to stop the Sun in its course, or the Sea in its flowing, as to prevent these concourses of the People to such Ministers that are eminently most able and successefull. Thus much I have said concerning the Reasonableness of forsaking Communion with one Church, for the obtaining a more profitable ministry in an other. The next thing to be examined is, that which you have said concerning the unlawfullness of forsaking one Church, to enjoy a more pure Discipline in an other. To this I say it must be confessed, that a regular execution of Church Discipline, as it was ordained by Christ for great ends: So, when so executed it is found of very great use and benefit to the Church, for thereby is there a means provided to inform the ignorantly sinning members, to correct the Wilfull, to reclaim Apostates, to establish and confirm the sound, that their Souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Christ.

Christ. And certainly, a neglect of this Discipline, must be a very dangerous consequence to a Church, and to the Salvation of its members. And therefore if Christians withdraw from such a Church where this Discipline is next to wholly neglected, to joyn with another where it is exercised to the great advantage of its members; I see no sin therein, as this author imagineth. For shall I say, the Law of Self-preservation, is superior to the Law of Visible Union to a Particular Church, and therefore must firstly be obeyed. May Parents Lawfully Change a School for their Children, where the Schollars by connivance, are suffered to Curse and Swear, &c. and yet are kept in the School; especially if great Mens Children: perhaps some poor mans childe, for some one of these sins, may now and then be cast out but readmited upon very slender satisfaction. I say, may Parents in this case, (tendering the Souls of their Children) remove them to another, and yet be blameless? I wonder then why it should be so Criminal for a Christian to remove from such a Church, where such sins are in like manner tollerated; for the benefit of a better Disciplined Church.

True, if Learning was as necessary as Christianity, and if no other School could be had; it were better their Children to be kept in such a School, than to be suffered to run about the streets to their more certain ruine. For the Rule of Practice to every Christian in this case, is, of two evils to choose the least: But as things stand with us in *England*, there are more pure Disciplined Churches to be had, and therefore no Christian can be thought to be in such straits. If ye say, these more pure Disciplined Churches are irregular, as not having the Establishment of an humane Law: I answer, it is not necessary; For the Constitution of Churches, and their Establishment; is founded on a Law of Christ, and not on Humane Laws. Christs Ministers have a right to Preach the Gospell, and Gather Churches, and Govern them by his Rules; without the leave of any Magistrates. The powers of the Earth may be Nursing Fathers to the Church, but as such, they neither give them their Being or Constitution. When Christ sent the first Preachers of the Gospell, to Discipline Nations, and gather to him Churches, he did not direct them first to ask the Governours of those Nations

leave so to do: for his own Commission was warrant sufficient without their Licence: but when God is pleased to stir up the hearts of Princes to give leave and encourage the work, it is a great Blessing; which Christs Ministers are to pray for, and to be greatly thankfull when they have it.

Yet again, I answer, that those Churches are most Regular that are Taught and Governed with the greatest conformity to the Rule of Christ, and if those of the Non-conformists prove such, I know not why any should be blamed for joyning with them upon the account of their irregularity.

Thus have I answered this Fourth position of yours, and have shewed how far an unprofitable Ministry and Corrupt Discipline in your Church, gives ground of separation from you.

His Fifth and Last Proposition.

That though we have a just Cause to refuse Communion with the Church whereof we are members, in some instances; yet we are not therefore to proceed to so total a separation from it, as to Erect a New Church in Contra-distinction to it, or to joyn with those that do. The Reason he gives is, *because we are bound to obey as far as we can, but at no hand to disturb the Peace.*

To the Reason I Briefly answer, that these Ministers and People obey as far as they can, when they by obeying neither commit sin, or what they suspect to be sin, or when they neglect not some known duty; *Daniel* might not obey when he was forbid praying for some days to the true God: But for the Ministers of Christ not to go on in their Ministeriall work, and for the People not to enjoy all ordinances, is to neglect known duties, which they would be necessitated to do, if they joyned with you in some things only, and not in these they suspect, and therefore such a separation is Lawfull, notwithstanding his Reason, and now I answer to the Proposition: I may very well doubt whether this proposition be universally true, when this very Author, himself grants it is not, *For if a Church be so greatly and generally Corrupt in Doctrine and Practice, as the Church of* Rome, *so that the Salvation of those that Communicate with her be indanger'd*

ger'd, it is then not only lawfull to ſeparate, but to Erect a new Church: this he confeſſeth in a very few lines following. Thus he hath provided wiſely good ſhelter for himſelf & his, from the firſt charge of his propoſition with reſpect to the Church of *Rome*, whileſt he hath left the poor Non-conformiſts to ſhift as they can with reſpect to their own Church; but by his leave I ſhall make bold with his own evaſion, for a covert to them alſo from this ſtorm, for what though the Corruptions and Doctrines and Practices be not ſo great and ſo generall in an other Church, as theirs in the Church of *Rome*? yet if they be but ſo many, and ſo great as to endanger their Salvation, it is ſufficient to warrant ſuch a ſeparation.

And now (if you will give me leave) I will tell you how theſe People concieve their Salvation is indangered, through your corruptions. If they ſhould not ſeparate as they do, I ſay then, Theſe outed Miniſters (do not wonder) if they conceive it is by reaſon of the corruptions, that many hundreds of them have been caſt out and ſilenced as much as in them lies: and why? becauſe they will not ſwear and forſwear, aſſent and conſent to all that they would have them, by reaſon whereof they are reduced to theſe ſtraits, either to ſwear and do as you would have them, and that againſt their Conſciences: or elſe to wrap their Tallants (through ſlaviſh fear, like ſlothful Servants) in a Napkin; and forſake the work of the Miniſtry, which their Lord has intruſted them with: if they do the former, they like wicked Hypocrites will go againſt their own Conſciences, and ſo will indanger their Salvation, or elſe like falſe and treacherous Stewards, muſt deſert their maſters work and ſo incurre the doom of ſuch Stewards; ſo that let them look on the right hand or on the left, they ſee nothing but damnation; what then is left for them to do but to go on in their work as now they do for their own ſafety, that is to Preach, Teach, Father and Rule his People, which you are pleaſed to call the erecting of new Churches, which (as I ſaid) is no more than to do the duty of Chriſts Miniſters, and therefore cannot juſtly be charged on them as their ſin. You call theſe erected Churches new, and what if they be new in reſpect to the time of their riſe, that is not their fault, but if you conſider them with reſpect to their rule,

rule, either of their Worſhip or Goverament, ſo they may be more Antient than your own; for ſuch Societies of Chriſtians that meet with Chriſts Miniſters to worſhip God according to the way of the Goſpel Churches, without impoſed Forms of Prayer, or without the uſe of any ſuperſtitiouſly impoſed veſtments, or when they meet, to Adminiſter Sacraments without any impertinent ſuperſtitious uſe of the ſign of the Croſſe, or to Eat the Supper in a Feaſtival poſture, as Chriſt and his Apoſtles did, or ſuch Churches that are governed by Chriſts Officers, (and ſuch Presbyters unqueſtionably are)not by lay Chancellors, unheard of in the firſt Churches, where nothing is impoſed on the Members, but what Chriſt by command hath made neceſſary, and nothing cenſured as ſcandalous and threatned with Excommunion,but that that is an evidenttranſgreſſion of ſome plain law of Chriſt; and not where the tranſgreſſors of Gods laws, as Drunkenneſs, Whoredome, Swearing are in a manner connived at, or if at any time cenſured in ſome poor People, the cenſure is upon very ſlight grounds taken off, upon a very ſlight and formal Repentance, or the payment of a few groats. But where the tranſgreſſion of a Ceremonious law, or a Tradition of the Elders, is dealt with as a ſin unpardonable, fines, impriſonments, ſilencing, baniſhments, Excommunications are puniſhments all thought little enough for ſo great a ſcandal. Let now any man well conſider both theſe ſorts of Churches, both as to their way of Worſhip, Adminiſtration of Sacraments, or way of Government, and then tell me whether of them are more conformable to the Antient Apoſtolical pattern,and ſo which of them deſerve the name of old, and which of new Churches. But notwithſtanding all this, peradventure you will ſay, that we have broke the Unity of theNational Church,which we ought to have preſerved.

I Anſwer, we have but broke it by accident, and you perceive but by accident, for no man can be ſaid to ſin, or to be a Peace-breaker when he is but doing his duty; and I conceive it hath been proved that we do no more: *Elijah* was charged with being the troubler of Iſrael, and the Apoſtles with turning the world upſide down, and yet they were faultleſs. But you rather

ther are breakers of it *per se*, for do but you impose no more upus than Christ our Lord hath done, either by Himself or his Apostles, as necessary conditions of Communion, and be but you willing to receive these as Ministers and Members which Christ receives and owns, and I dare say we shall soon enjoy a blessed Peace, and that upon Righteous Foundations which Christ would certainly bless and cause to last; but if you will drive us to such straits as that either we must wound our Consciences by a sinful compliance with you, at least, with such a compliance that we suspect sinful, or else live in the neglect of our known duties and without the enjoyment of some Ordinances. I beseech you blame us not for what we do, for you your selves have made it necessary: this I think is a sufficient answer to your fifth and last proposition, which being all you have said that directly concerns us, I shall take the boldness to conclude with your own words, 'I am verily perswaded that I have said nothing in this my re-'ply, but what is very agreeable to Scripture and reason, and the 'sence of the best and Antientest, *i. e.* Apostolical Christians and 'Churches.

FINIS.